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# *I Photograph Russia*

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*JAMES E. ABBE*

WITH 80  
PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY  
THE  
AUTHOR

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*I PHOTOGRAPH RUSSIA*

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*I Photograph Russia*



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## CHAPTER I

### *FRAMING UP STALIN*

WELL then—get me photographs of Hitler coming out of a synagogue!” said Herr Korff, the Jewish editor of Germany’s largest weekly. And with a perfectly straight face.

My spirits fell.

“Or,” he continued slyly, winking at his giant Jewish managing editor, “get me photographs of Stalin in his Kremlin!”

“All right,” I said, before the editorial wink had had time to lodge in the managerial eye of Old Purse Strings. “I accept the Stalin commission!”

“But wait a minute!” shouted Purse Strings. “We’re not going to advance any money on impossible projects like photographing Stalin. He won’t even pose for Bolshevik photographers! He won’t be photographed except on public occasions. In groups. You wouldn’t even get to his secretary. You couldn’t even get by the guards at the Kremlin Gate. It’s better you wait for Hitler coming out of a synagogue. And have you forgotten how much money you spent the last time you went to Moscow? Five years



ago, it is. But certainly *I* haven't forgotten, even if you have."

And so to pull myself together after those body blows, I turned and strode to the window.

Over Berlin's rooftops I could see Moscow's Kremlin. In a palace chamber sat that most powerful, ruthless, inapproachable ruler of the age, Joseph Stalin. Taciturn, forbidding, awe-inspiring, and yet, as I set up my camera he walked toward me and extended his hand in greeting.

All a mirage, of course. An unrealized journalistic scoop. Because I was still conscious of those two pairs of editorial eyes boring into the back of my head. I had gazed out of that same window of *Ullsteinhaus* too many times in the past seven years. Mirage or no mirage in the distance, the foreground of Berlin chimneystops was insistently actual; as surely calculated to bring me back to earth as the "business is business" attitude of Herr Szafranski, Old Purse Strings.

The mirage began to dissipate. The medieval Kremlin enclosed in its triangle of high brick walls, its ancient palaces, minareted towers, faded out over the Berlin horizon; but I had received my hunch. The impulse, without which I never once made a decision, was stirring in my breast or somewhere.

Striding confidently toward my reluctant backers, I took my stance where the light would be in their eyes and at my back, and resorted to the old gag of thumping on the desk. I opened with a verbal barrage to cover my attack. "I asked you what job you'd wanted for years, and couldn't get," I shot at them. "Herr Korff right away gives me two to get. Obviously, I can do only one at a time. I choose Stalin for the first. I accept your proposal

and right away Herr Szafranski starts backing out. Why is that?" I asked, trying to hypnotize Purse Strings through his thick eyeglasses.

Diminutive Korff drew my fire, spreading his hands helplessly.

"It is impossible," he said dolefully.

"What!" I said. "Herr Korff you astonish me. Always when I have gone off for you, for scoops, always in my ears were your words "Nothing is for a good reporter impossible." And while Korff squirmed under that one I turned to Szafranski: "How many years have you been advancing me money on impossible assignments?"

"It seems a thousand," he answered sadly.

"Well," I pressed, "have I even once failed to bring back the photos?"

Here Korff came gingerly to my rescue by saying to Szafranski: "*Nun*, Szafranski, we must admit that Abbe good material brings back."

"*Ja*," shrugged Szafranski, "but it is I who must always with money bring Abbe back. From Mexico. From Chicago. From Spain. Only last week from Austria. From everywhere with money I must bring him! But now—" and at this point he reached over on Korff's desk, picked off a card from the top of a stack and handed it to me in silence. On it was printed, for just such an emergency as Abbe: ES GIBT KEIN GELD (There is no money).

Rallying, I continued: "Remember the telegram you sent me in Moscow, the winter of 1927—Please return Berlin without spending more money will forgive four thousand marks already gone?"

Yes, they recalled such a telegram.

"Didn't I remain four months after that telegram?"

Didn't I bring you back the first inside photos of Russia since the Revolution? Didn't you say 'wonderful'?"

Once more Herr Korff appealed to Herr Szafranski. "Abbe is a luxury but he does bring back photos finally." To which Szafranski replied: "Why must we advance money to luxurious American photographers when German photographers are on the dole?"

"Nationality or race doesn't enter into the matter," I said. "Well do you know that in the orderly mind of a German photographer there does not exist the flair for popping off on uncharted courses to bring you back a scoop."

"*Gott sei dank*," responded Szafranski fervently. Gathering together my wavering forces, I flung myself at them with "Give me only two thousand marks, and I'll bring you back Stalin's photos and lay them on this very desk."

Sympathetic little Korff brightened at the prospect, but Szafranski controlled himself. "But times have changed, *lieber Abbe*," he pleaded. "The Nazis are coming! Maybe we are not here when you come back. Maybe *Ullsteinhaus* is not here."

"In which case," I quickly interposed, attempting a joke, "there will be two thousand marks less for the Nazis." Which jocular suggestion brought forth only two sickly grins.

Then Szafranski got a real inspiration. "Go to the *New York Times* office. Herr Wohlfeil knows you. You have worked for them. They have plenty of money. They will advance you the two thousand marks and we will guarantee them five hundred of it." And he fairly beamed on me as he passed the buck. And Herr Korff, happy to see the

conference nearing an end, repeated his old parting salvo: "Nothing is for a good reporter impossible."

So I retreated down the corridor licking my wounds. But suddenly retracing my steps I burst into their office once more. Their faces fell.

"Will you phone Wohlfeil that you approve this project?" I asked Szafranski.

"Certainly, at once," replied Szafranski, appearing relieved that my last request was so modest. As he reached for the phone, Korff said to me under his breath: "Szafranski will always approve advancing money, *by somebody else.*"

Hard-boiled Wohlfeil, German-American-Jew manager of the Berlin office of the *New York Times* photo service pricked up his ears as I said, "Well, I'm going to Moscow to photograph Stalin in the Kremlin," but let them fall when I added, "and I want two thousand marks!"

Compared to Wohlfeil, Szafranski and Korff were profligate spenders, so I reversed my tactics of fifteen minutes earlier. Ten of the fifteen minutes it took me to step the hundred feet from *Ullsteinhaus* to the *New York Times* office, I had spent in a bar gulping down a double cognac. I walked into Wohlfeil's office much steadier, with the idea in my mind of acting mysteriously and talking much less.

"Oh yeah!" retorted the deep-chested, aggressive Wohlfeil to my blunt ultimatum. "There are only eighteen million registered and fingerprinted photographers in the world, and to a man they have *not* succeeded in photo-

graphing Stalin; with the exception of a few trusty Bolsheviks on public occasions, and then from the hip."

His words ricocheted off of his glass-topped desk and missed my self-assurance by a safe margin.

"I wouldn't be interested in doing the job if it had ever been done," said the double cognac on my behalf. "As a matter of fact," I continued, leisurely lighting a cigarette, "I've got the thing sewed up." And by that time I was prepared to believe anything I said.

"How sewed up?" he demanded skeptically.

"I'm not at liberty to disclose the details of the project," I muttered reprovingly. "All you need to know is that if you hand me two thousand marks you'll get the world distribution rights on the biggest photographic scoop since the sinking of the *Vestris*." Which remark gave him an opening to say, "Now you're going to tell me it was *you* who shot the sinking of the *Vestris*."

"No," I countered, "it was I who photographed, single-handed, the last Mexican revolution, gang warfare in Chicago, behind the scenes at Oxford, Primo de Rivera, Life in the Louvre, the camera-shy Arabs in the Lybian Desert, the birth of sound pictures in Hollywood, Hitler in his Braunhaus in Munich, to mention only a few of my scoops which are as well known to you as to me. I'm a scoop-specialist."

"You think well of yourself, don't you?" he inquired sarcastically.

"Not so well as the *Associated Press Photo Service* does of me," I tossed back at him.

The mention of his biggest competitor did my cause no harm. I could see that by the way he chewed down on his black cigar stump. So I said, "Think it over, and phone

me, Wohlfeil. There's no hurry. It'll take me a week to get ready anyhow" . . . and I made as if to leave.

"Hold on," he said, stalling for time, "why doesn't Ullstein back you?"

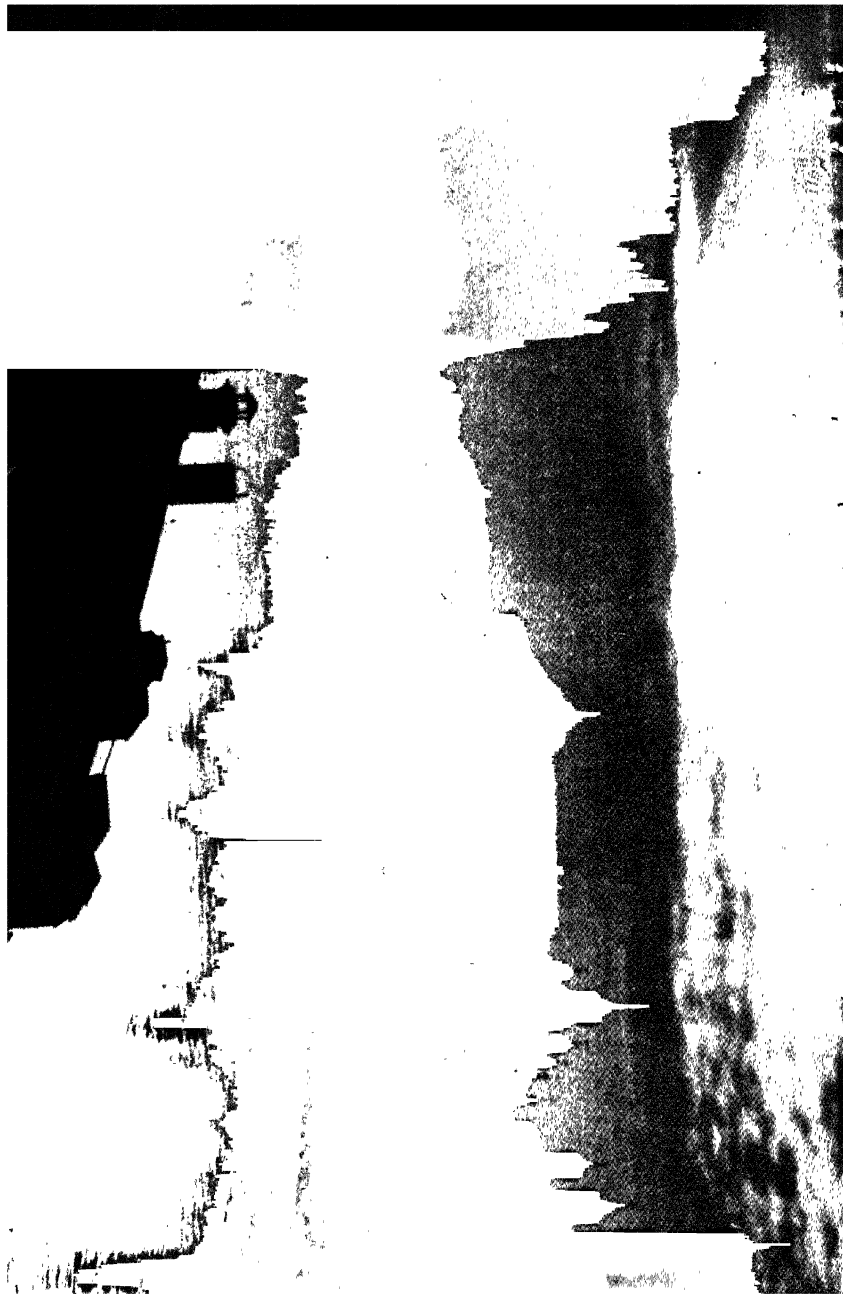
"Korff and Szafranski sent me here. They have no doubt phoned you they'll underwrite five hundred marks," I said, with my hand on the doorknob.

Wohlfeil is built like a wrestler, and acted as if he saw me getting a hammerlock on him. As I turned the door knob suggestively I could see the ticker tape in his journalistic mind registering:

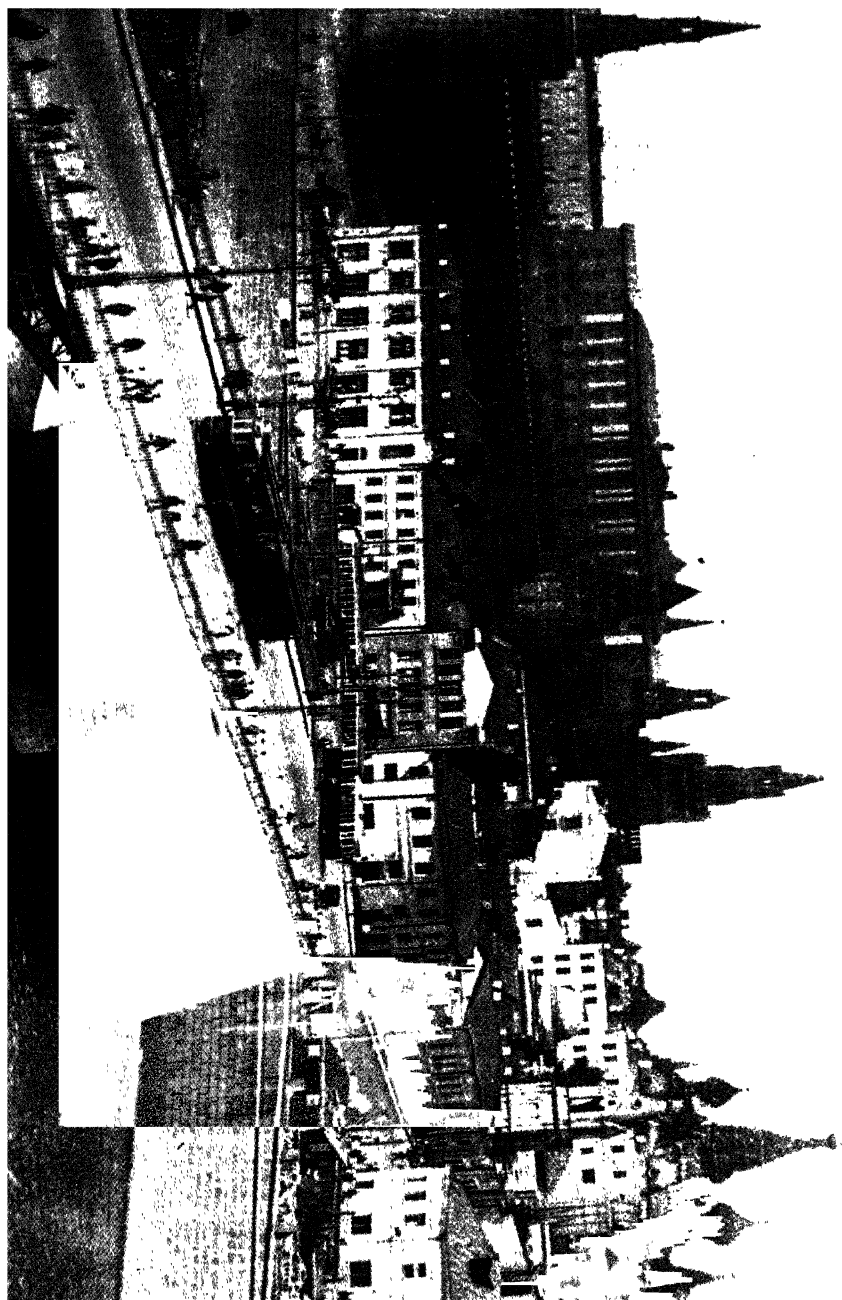
"ABBE LIAR BUT BECAUSE UNKNOWS  
STALIN WONT PHOTOGRAPH MIGHT  
GET BY WITH IT STOP WORTH TWO  
THOUSAND MARKS SLEEP NIGHTS  
KNOWING ASSOCIATED PRESS OFFCUT  
DAMMIT"

Two days later he phoned me to come and get the money, but (as I finally learned) only after cabling the *Times* offices in Paris, London and New York, and getting them to guarantee five hundred each, which, added to Ullstein's five hundred, left his Berlin office clear. He's a fourteen carat buckpasser, that Wohlfeil. But even at that, he handed me the check for two thousand about the way a man bets on a 100 to 1 horse.

Night over Moscow, a scene of incredible beauty. From the New Moscow Hotel your eye travels over the moonlit river to the mighty Kremlin, its many spires and towers etched darkly against a luminous sky.







Daily I would gaze out from my hotel window upon this scene, wondering where within the Kremlin was the *raison d'être* of my Russian voyage and of this book.

---

## CHAPTER II

### *BETWEEN TWO WORLDS*

THE last stop in Poland is Stolpce—pronounce it as you wish—Stolpce, the outpost of gouty Capitalism as you journey toward the land where they are “building Socialism.” Good old Stolpce! A station bristling with food, souvenirs, postcards and shining swords that dangle from smartly uniformed soldiers and swashbuckling officers.

I had been escorted into a private office in that very station when I “came out” of Russia in the early spring of 1928. They had searched me with a fine-tooth comb when they discovered I had grown a beard which did not tally with my passport photo. Only my credentials from a French publication prevented them from putting me through a political delousing station.

So I was glad that a new guard was on duty rather than veterans inclined to dissuade me from once again plunging into the Red Sea of Bolshevism. Nevertheless all Polish officials on the frontier check up your papers to prepare you for Russia as seriously as a physician about to operate or an undertaker to embalm you. This done, the twenty-

mile journey across the No Man's Land from Stolpce to Negorelye, Soviet Russia's receiving station, always feels like the wheel-table bound for the operating theater—or merely a hearse.

The Bolsheviks operate in one way or another on every living being who visits their political, economic and social clinic. You can't even walk through their hospital without hearing groans through half-closed doors or seeing screens drawn around the dying.

You may decide to have your capitalistic appendix removed, try out their communistic electric baths or submit yourself to the hypnotic influence of Intourist guides, but, male or female, old or young, no human being has ever visited Soviet Russia and returned to the outside world the same person. Some claim great benefits from their treatment, some scream to heaven of the torture undergone, but one and all are in some way affected. Which makes a thrilling experience, in anticipation, in performance and in retrospect.

Negorelye is Soviet Russia's sentry box on the Russo-Polish frontier. The Polish train runs under a wooden arch a few hundred yards this side of the Negorelye station. On the arch is inscribed:

### WORKMEN OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

The first workmen you see on the platform are soldiers, to be specific, uniformed members of the GPU; they are the outpost of the most powerful, the most efficiently organized and ruthlessly functioning secret police in the world.

The GPU, sometimes known in news despatches as

OGPU, is an outgrowth of the old Red Cheka. The name is pronounced Gay Pay Oo—but pronounced softly and discreetly! No native and no foreigner who knows his stuff would dare utter these three magic syllables save with bated breath.

From the moment you set foot on Soviet soil until you leave it weeks, months or years later your presence, your movements, your correspondence and your most instinctive reaction to the building of Socialism are watched and noted by these boys and girls who “protect the State” not only from people like you and me but also from their own nationals. When resident American correspondents, engineers and salesmen of all sorts have cause to refer to the GPU in restaurants or other public places, they speak of the Y.M.C.A. the Phi Beta Kappa or the boys with the boots, to mention only three of a dozen or more names that elude eavesdropping waiters, spying native secretaries and prowling chambermaids. Englishmen, for their part, resort to such titles as the Royal Engineers, the Beef-eaters and the Queen’s Own.

But regardless of the resident foreigner’s nationality, color, race or creed, he soon acquires a definite if not wholesome respect for this closely knit society for the prevention of cruelty to Bolshevism.

I had run afoul of this Greek letter fraternity on only one occasion during my previous visit to Russia, when I was arrested, questioned and released.

So then, as I stepped off the Polish train at Negorelye, recognized the uniformed GPU and spotted the plain-clothes men, I felt quite at home again. The home every man who is out for fun and business should keep up his

sleeve as an antidote to the boredom of the relative routine by which crumbling Capitalism prospers.

My somewhat noncommittal credentials from the *New York Times* seemed a tolerable recommendation to the huddled heads of the customs men after they had spread out my luggage on the long counter. The *Times* correspondent in Moscow since 1922 had put in some heavy licks at making Americans conscious of the idealistic aims, real or fancied, of the "builders of Socialism." Even the border officials knew Duranty, the Britisher who had so successfully and almost painlessly removed the Red blood clot from the brains of those who devour "all the news that's fit to print." I had known Duranty since 1927 but even *his* name did not counteract my latest scrapbook with its capitalistic clippings, photographs and articles.

I allowed my eye to wander about the freshly painted murals of happy peasants gathering grain in sun-kissed Utopian fields as the customs men scrutinized clichés of champagne-fed legs of Casino de Paris coryphées in my scrapbook, and, as the openly secret police questioned me about the constabulary and gangsters of Chicago, I grew more and more enthusiastic about the smiling proletariat engaged in pouring oil into vividly colored machinery.

"When did you build this beautiful new station?" I asked a surly-looking officer who knew English. "When I left Russia in 1928, the big log cabin affair was still in use."

My question brought forth no data. Instead: "What were you doing in the USSR the last time?" he asked me, and I turned back the pages of my scrapbook to the legs of their own charmers I had shot on my last visit to

Russia. The pulchritude of these damsels merely caused him to remark that my political ideology was all wrong.

They held the scrapbook for further examination and started picking on my battery of cameras, films and flash-lamps. Did I know that it was forbidden to take photographs in the USSR without the permission from the GPU? Did I know that professional photographers could not operate without a contract from the *Soyuzphoto* or Soviet Photo Trust?

Yes, I knew all that, I assured them, and I would duly obtain necessary permission in Moscow.

Seeing that I was making no headway, I suddenly flashed a document which has seen me through many a tight place in Europe, passed me through police lines, into theaters, and won me a ringside seat with photographic privileges at the National Rat-killing Contest at Arpajon in France. In only one city has it ever failed to function: in Chicago! Because everyone else there carries a Chicago Police Card!

It worked once again! Apparently the job of censoring incoming bourgeois publications had acquainted these guardians of Bolshevik morals with Chicago gang warfare, for I immediately became a personage on the strength of a pass to our most widely publicized American sport. I went through with flying colors. The officials, grown friendly, delegated two of their number to see me comfortably installed on the train for Moscow, and, as I settled myself in the luxurious sleeping-car compartment, I asked a blessing on Big Bill Thompson, who had ordered that card given me.

The wide-gauge Soviet train finally got under weigh, slowly, like a liner leaving a pier. The locomotive ahead

sounded one long baritone note and we glided into a land bigger than the North Atlantic Ocean . . . a vast stretch of earth as tempestuous or as deceptively calm as the ocean, a maw ready to swallow you up as you head out into its infinite reaches. There is nothing on earth like it, certainly; nothing I have experienced: cruel, yet hospitable, ageless yet experimenting on humanity with modern instruments; populous with its 160,000,000 inhabitants yet sparsely settled; one-sixth of the whole world's surface: Soviet Russia.

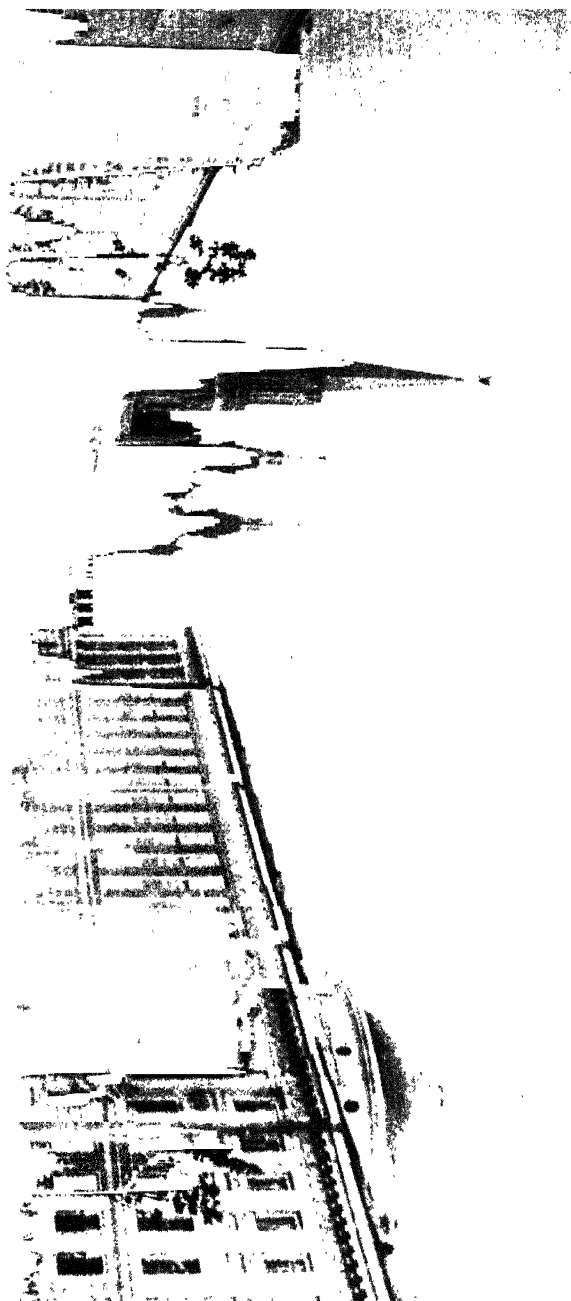
Infrequent villages appeared and disappeared on the frozen landscape, their log houses huddled together for companionship against the overpowering space of land and sky. Now and then the lone figure of a peasant stood out from the snowy ground as he plodded along—whither? Whither, indeed, is the Russian peasant headed? How can Stalin hope to organize and collectivize 125,000,000 of these hard-headed agriculturists into anything remotely approaching a human herd?

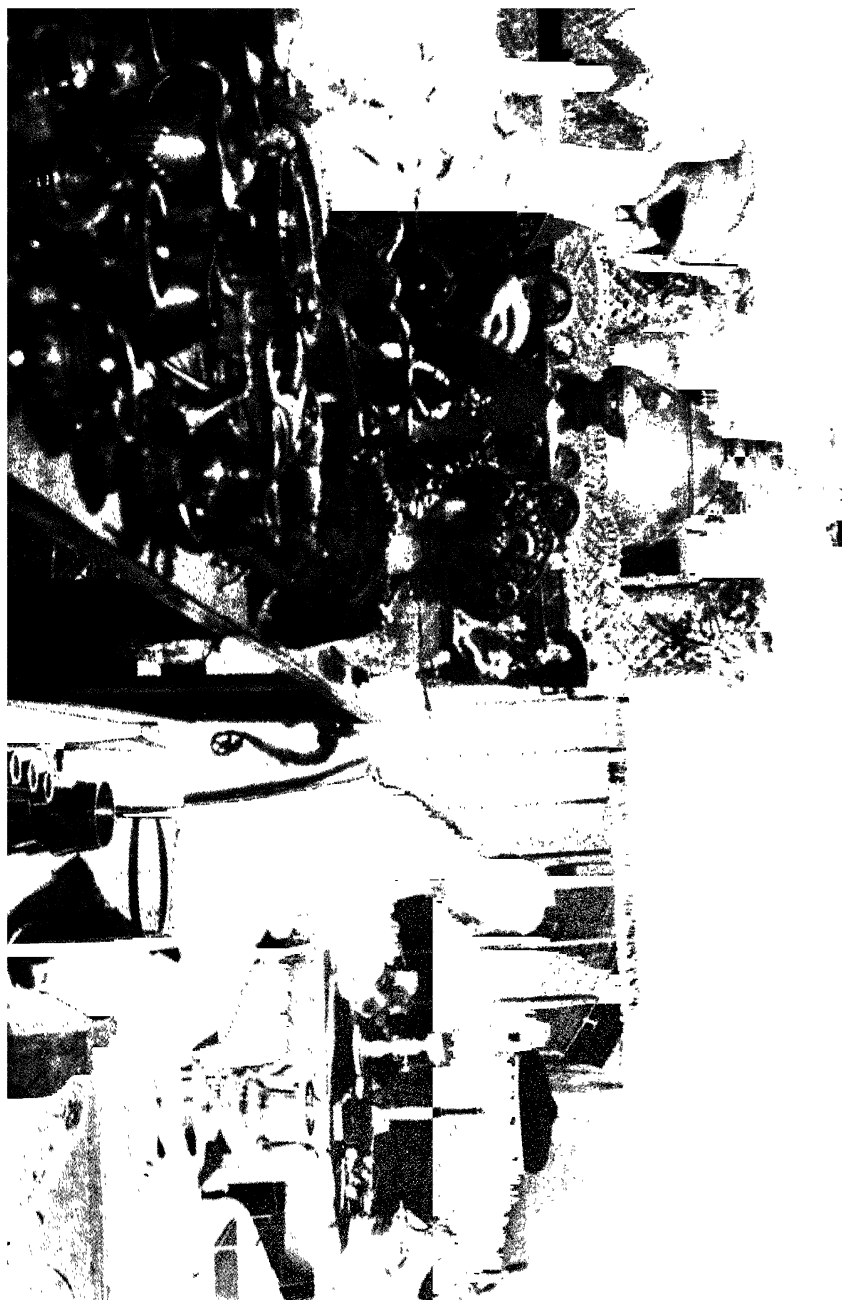
As the rays of the sinking sun disappeared beyond the rolling horizon, the evanescent dark pine forests rose and retreated even more foreboding. I pulled down the shade, then went in search of fellow passengers, for foreigners in Russia instinctively foregather.

Our car was heated. All the same, one Robert Lamont, Jr., son of USA's then Secretary of Commerce, was wearing the biggest beaver coat that ever left Larkspur, Colorado. Topped off with a four-and-a-half gallon hat, Lamont, the war veteran, cattle rancher, firm-chinned scion of our wild and woolly West, looked as if he would like somebody to hold his hand. It didn't take a railroad detective to see that he was far off his beat. He might have been figuring that he was off on his "La-a-a-st



The Kremlin, covering 100 acres and enclosed by a high, stone-battlemented wall 2430 yards in length. Somewhere within the imposing palace on the right are Stalin's private offices . . . but where, I am pledged not to tell.





Artisans, ruthlessly obliterating immortal names from age-old works of art. For *Romanoff*, they substitute *New Moscow Hotel*, and tourists who steal silver spoons for souvenirs are just as happy.

ro-u-n-d-u-p" wishing he were anywhere except in a Bolshevik sleeper too big to be hustled out by the stamped aristocracy of the Old Régime.

Not having as yet got my Russian sea-legs, I proposed we both take a nip of vodka to buck us up. So he followed me to the dining-car, fur coat and all, like a Colorado bear expectantly sniffing his unfamiliar Russian brethren. . . .

We sat at a table with a Bolshevik named Magidson and a German machinery salesman. After a couple of rounds of vodka, we all felt better. Lamont took off his fur tent, fifteen good old Colorado beavers all sewed up in one piece and trapped by their wearer. (Even in fur-bearing Russia that coat was beginning to attract attention!) The German became reconciled to the inevitable procrastination of machinery buyers in Moscow. Magidson himself quickly lost that hurt look of a man about to go off of an expense account. As for the boy-photographer off on a manhunt with a photographic slingshot, he stood on his hind legs and vowed he would "shoot Stalin" if he had to tear down the Kremlin Wall with his bare hands.

In good time, Lamont's bill arrived and Magidson, much embarrassed, translated it for his benefit:

4 vodkas (glasses not much larger than eye-cups) . . . . .	16	roubles
1 portion caviar (heaping soup spoon's worth) . . . . .	5	"
2 pieces black bread ("normal" slices) . .	1	"
1 glass tea with lemon . . . . .	2	"
1 pat of butter . . . . .	2	"
1 portion of goose . . . . .	6	"
1 pastry . . . . .	4	"
1 package cigarettes (25) . . . . .	4	"

---

Grand Total . . . . . 40 roubles

"That's twenty dollars!" said the astonished Lamont; while Magidson and the German tactfully retired to the end of the car to examine a framed chromo of Lenin and to give me a chance to enlighten my bewildered compatriot.

"Did you buy roubles at the Negorelye station?" I asked him.

"Yes. The man gave me a little less than a hundred for fifty dollars."

"That's correct," I explained. "That's the official rate. As a matter of fact they cost around forty or fifty to the dollar in Polish Stolpce. But you're not allowed to bring them into Russia."

"What!" he groaned. "You can't bring their own money into Russia?" He sounded as though I were to blame.

"Look here, Lamont, aren't you the guest of the Soviet Cattle Trust? Aren't your expenses all paid from Larkspur to Larkspur? Are you going to stop your benefactors having their little joke when they're paying for it themselves?"

"Yes," he replied, "but how can *you* afford such prices on your own?"—a question I answered by requesting the waiter to put my bill in German marks, which made it twelve-and-one-half marks or three dollars.

I finally got Lamont talking about his mission in Russia, which was to advise the Cattle Trust how to breed enough cattle to replace two-thirds of the entire bovine population, slaughtered and eaten by the peasants when the government had persisted in collectivizing stock-breeding as well as agriculture.

---

## CHAPTER III

### *STALKING STALIN*

**T**HROUGH the double windows of my room in the New Moscow Hotel, I gazed across the intervening Moscow River at my goal: the Kremlin. No mirage this time, the real thing! Every day for three weeks I'd rolled out of bed, stuck the electric rod in my teapot, made my breakfast of tea and black bread, studied that scene like a generalissimo studying the field of battle and speculated interminably on my chances of cutting through the red tape, breaking through the massive walls, passing the diligent sentries and crashing into the Presence! Stalin!

Could I wangle a people who slaughtered the Czar and left their hated victim's double eagle loom defiantly atop the Kremlin towers? Could I sell my project to revolutionists who execute priests, abolish religion yet permit Christ's cross to dominate the pinnacle of every minareted spire of the seven churches within the Kremlin walls? I could even see workmen regilding the church domes while to one side the red flag of Communism fluttered triumphantly in the March wind.

Across the bridge below my hotel, overcrowded trams and overladen trucks rumbled, hooted and clanged. The

waning winter's ice rimmed the river banks. Over the top of the Kremlin Wall I could see troops drilling in orderly formation. A light artillery battery, maneuvered with snap and precision; marching infantry, their long-skirted coats and their arms swinging in rhythmic unison.

Wind-driven snow heightened the illusion of mystery. Peering through my finder I tried to decide under which of those crazy roofs sat Stalin, the lord of the orderly Kremlin. At length, for the twentieth time, I set up my camera and shot the scene, gingerly fingering the official photographer's permit in my pocket.

Even with an official photo permit, there is a long list of forbidden subjects. The very bridge before me was taboo, presumably because bridges are vulnerable in warfare or counter-revolution. Railway stations, trains, tracks, breadlines, meatlines, any sort of queue for food, fun or foolishness, accidents, streetcars, automobiles, airplanes, all are taboo; the world might jump to the conclusion that proletarian dictatorship is not efficient. Banquet photos are also prohibited; it would never do for starving peasants to run across a shot of Bolshevik officialdom getting a square meal. Photograph the military and you can go to prison for espionage; photograph a power plant and you are arrested for planning sabotage. Heaven help you if you photograph Red Square, for instance, or Lenin's Tomb. Why? Even the Foreign Office could not tell. Months later I discovered from the only official with a sense of humor in the Corps when he whispered: "The camera rights to both places belong to the Playing Card Trust!"

Over Moscow's rooftops I could see Berlin's *Ullsteinhaus*, New York's *Times* and the hotel where my wife



was awaiting the result of my quest. I visualized the scene: Szafranski leaning over Korff's desk, saying, "I wonder how old Abbe is getting along with Stalin?" Wohlfeil, scratching his baldish head, anticipating the New York, Paris and London offices' polite query: "What about the five hundred marks you got us to give Abbe?" The children asking Mamma: "Has Papa shot Stalin?"

Something had to be done, and that something, I decided, meant another visit to Walter Duranty, the British-born correspondent of the *New York Times*. He ought to be good for a couple more calls before he barred my entrance into his flat. Anyhow, weren't we working for the same paper?

Quite an establishment, Duranty's. His assistant, "Bigboy" Bob Kincaid from California; a secretary, Beth Gilles, daughter of an American engineer; an elderly Russian woman to cook for him and a younger Russian housemaid; a Russian youth to drive his car and Katcha the beautiful, who ran the whole household including the dynamic Duranty himself.

Duranty in public places is a well-groomed gnomelike person of about fifty winters, with a sparkling answer to any banal question hurled at him. In his Moscow home he always appears to have rolled out of bed so eager to get to work that he hadn't brushed his scanty hair or donned his collar. His talent for perversity caused him to champion the cause of the Bolsheviks back in the days when the respectable world at large tried to snub them out of existence. Having taken his stand, he has stuck to his story though himself a snob and justifiably so. His brilliant acrobatic mind qualifies him as an intellectual

aristocrat; as a philosophic observer of human antics, he lost standing among his British compatriots and their Moscow Embassy but won it with the Soviet Foreign Office.

"What did you do for a living before you devoted your life to stalking Stalin?" Duranty asked, squinting up from his typewriter.

I outlined briefly my photographic career.

"Couldn't you go back to your old job?" he inquired solicitously.

And that's the way it would go. I tried to help Duranty with his own work by pointing out that he should never sit at a typewriter facing the light, which caused him to squint, thereby distorting his perspective on life. I even called his attention to the fact that he had ten fingers available for typing whereas he made use of only two. I gave him a lot of good advice and tips on how to become a journalist, which, to my mind, warranted my expecting his help and advice about getting Stalin.

I lingered with Tatiana, the beautiful typist of the New Moscow Hotel, who would have been a countess had things turned out differently in Russia. A ballet dancer as well as a typist; perhaps if I took some nude pictures of her it would temporarily divert my mind from Stalin. Alas! she would have none of it. Or I used to sit at Gogo's table and get him talking of the good old days when he was floor-waiter at the Plaza in New York. At present manager of the hotel restaurant, Gogo saw to it that I got real coffee instead of the soya-bean concoction with which Intourist provides their *valuta* visitors. Or I would watch the guests at the hotel. Sixty per cent of them American Jews of Russian origin or descent, here

Ice appears on the Moscow river only at dawn. People rise early to watch it crash into the bridges, break into shining fragments, shoot high into the air and wash against the walls of the embankment.





Coronation Chair in which the last of the czars was crowned. It is in one of the Kremlin churches—the Coronation Church—so called because it was used only for that purpose.

to see their race rule a new civilization instead of slave under the old; twenty per cent out-of-town GPU officers with their wives and children—on “affairs of state”; five per cent parlor Bolsheviki from the four winds having a quick look at “building Socialism”; another five per cent German engineers and salesmen; nine per cent bourgeois visitors. The remaining one per cent consisted of an American press photographer waiting for Stalin to make up his mind.

The whole ninety-nine per cent were in their various ways interesting, but too approachable, too willing to converse. I craved Stalin, the unapproachable, the taciturn.

On the sixth floor of the hotel there is a bay window reading room garnished with furniture from some Czarist palace. Here are foreign newspapers culled by the censor for foreign criticism of Bolshevism. By the merest oversight there lay on the table a week-old copy of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, whose Moscow correspondent Paul Schaeffer had been refused reëntrance into Russia because of a too critical book he wrote on the Bolsheviki.

As I ran through it, I stumbled on to an item which sent me scurrying into my room. Locking the door I read it over and over; there I read between the lines. That article afforded me my clue, it offered me Stalin's reason for being photographed, it put my scoop into my hands as plainly as if an angel from heaven in uniform had delivered it.

## STALIN REPORTED SERIOUSLY ILL

FAILING IN HEALTH  
GERMAN SPECIALIST HURRYING  
TO THE KREMLIN

I was positive the report was untrue. But surely the Kremlin, the Foreign Office, the Soviet Government would be quick to see the damage to Soviet commercial credit if foreign prospective creditors began to worry about Stalin's health?

I grabbed my hat and coat, dashed out. What an argument I had up my sleeve! I kept breaking into a trot as I skirted the Chinese Wall; I was whistled off the forbidden Lubyanka Square by a traffic cop as I tried to save two minutes getting to the Foreign Office.

My old high school quarterback experience came in handy as I rushed through Moscow's pedestrian traffic—for with all their efforts to regulate human activity, the Bolos haven't yet decided whether pedestrianism should keep left or go right.

I flashed my correspondent's pass into the face of the GPU guard at the Foreign Office entrance and, skeptical of the problematic elevator, climbed the five flights in as many bounds.

Ken Foss, the Hearst correspondent, and Cholerton of the *London Chronicle* were waiting in the anteroom, cable in hand, as I entered.

"Who's chasing you?" Ken queried. While Cholerton, who is psychic, stroked his Vandyke and started psychoanalyzing me.

I never went into the Press Section of the Foreign Office without running into at least one correspondent; it was not unusual to meet six or eight there at once. This time I imagined they had all picked up the story of Stalin's illness and were tipping off their Berlin offices to send photographers and scoop me. On the other hand, the *Berliner Tageblatt* was a week old; besides, the very



last thing that worries pencil reporters is keeping their photo services informed.

It was nice to have Natalie, the pulchritudinous secretary of Gene Lyons, UP correspondent, figuratively hold my hand while Foss and Cholerton went in with their cables.

"Who's on today?" I asked them as they came out.

"Padolski," they told me, and my confidence in luck was gathering headway every second.

Padolski always sat behind his big flat desk with the air of a scholarly monk. Which in fact he was, although a Jew and the father of three gorgeous children. Without one single hair upon his head, he wears a beard that is positively tropical; he reminded me of an hourglass with the sand drained from the upper into the lower section. If you should develop a case of anti-Semitism upon learning that, from Maxim Litvinov down to the lowest subordinate official of the Soviet Union's Foreign Office, every man who helped to form this powerful connecting link with other nations is a Jew, you had better study Comrade Padolski before promoting a pogrom.

"Well, Abbe, what now?" he asked in English, one of his eight languages. I pulled out the German paper, placed it before him and pointed to the item about Stalin. Reading it through, he leaned back in his swivel-chair, fixed his eyes on mine, and read my entire plan as accurately as if I'd submitted it on paper.

Anyhow, I delivered him an inspired oration:

"You could rush all the available Soviet photographers into Stalin's office," I said, "you could send abroad thousands of photos showing that your chief is in the best of health. But not an editor would believe it! They'd swear

the whole thing was just one more Bolshevik trick to conceal the fact that Stalin was going to pieces. Whereas, one foreign photographer, with no obligations to report anything but the truth, could set the whole thing right in a few minutes."

With his quiet smile, Padolski rose, extended his hand and said:

"Leave it all to me. On behalf of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, I thank you for saving us from ruin. It isn't important that as a wangling photographer in quest of a scoop you don't care a hang what happens to our credit; your idea is sound."

And I went bounding out of his office on air.

Next day I was told by the bass-voiced floor porter that the *Nachkomidiel*, or Foreign Office, desired Comrade Abbe on the phone. It was Padolski, asking if I was attending the banquet tendered the press by Intourist that evening in my hotel. I was, but:

"Have you no news for me?" I wailed.

"Maybe tonight," he said grudgingly. "I'll be there myself."

The Bolos are always on the lookout for an occasion which warrants a banquet. This affair was dedicated to the opening of the tourist season. The tourists, of course, were not invited, only the press, for foreign correspondents alone could influence tourists to spend their money in Russia. Yet the native representatives outnumbered the foreign five to one, and Intourist officials two to one. However, nobody who has ever observed Bolsheviks eat and drink could begrudge them their fun, even when starvation existed all over their country.

While speeches were made in Russian, German and

English and we all were having a swell time "building Socialism" and toasting "the coming of the tourists," Padolski whispered that the Kremlin was favorably impressed by my project and agreed to notify Duranty if word came from Stalin.

When a message came requesting that I write a letter to Stalin stating how much of his time I needed and what disposition I intended to make of the photos, in the minds of Duranty and his entourage I had risen from a first-class pest to a star being groomed for his triumph. The atmospheric tension increased by leaps and bounds as we debated whether my letter to Stalin should be written in Russian or English. Stalin did not know English. Kincaid thought it should be in Russian so "Uncle Joe" could lean back in his chair and read it with his own eyes. But Stalin was not a Russian, he was a Georgian, Katcha objected: we should write him in Georgian. Beth Gilles recommended French as the orthodox diplomatic language of the world, even the Red world! Duranty himself stood for English because even the highest Soviet officials are impressed when foreigners take it for granted an official knows foreign languages.

We all worked for two hours on that document, discussing its length, brevity, phrasing, punctuation; we speculated on how far we could go, over my signature, in regard to admitting that I was the world's greatest press photographer. Then Duranty suddenly got cold feet for fear he'd commit the *New York Times* to my unexcelled qualifications; but admitted in desperation that he was so deeply involved in "the whole damned project" that he might as well and trust wholly in the evil spirit which guided press photographers about a

world which had obviously gone mad anyhow. After which statement, I organized Duranty's household into supporting my contention that Duranty himself should sign the letter and write it on *New York Times* stationery.

After escaping the Great War unscathed, Duranty lost a leg in a banal railway accident: he walks with a cane on an artificial leg. For once he astounded us all by stumping up and down his flat without the cane, as he swore he would not assume the responsibility of signing the letter. He did, though.

So far as I was concerned, Stalin was all photographed. As I depend almost solely on my hunches, I had never felt the slightest uneasiness after I read that item in the German paper.

The difference between shooting a portrait and shooting a portrait of Stalin in his Kremlin is that between walking a twelve-inch plank lying on the ground and walking the plank suspended across a chasm.

This particularly applied to me. For all my experience, I still make all the silly mistakes of the beginner. I have become so accustomed to the laboratory man emerging from the dark-room with the news that I have made double exposures that the news no longer affects me.

I got out all my cameras and laid them out on my bed in my room. I have bought practically every new camera invented in my time, hoping it might prove the one which could do no wrong.

I sorted out four outfits from my collection, eliminated those with bad records and chose an ordinary Kodak

The scoop of a lifetime even for a hard-boiled veteran. Sinister, cold as steel, mysterious and remote, Stalin, the Red Czar, never before or since consented to sit for his portrait. (Reproduced from one of the two pictures ever autographed by Stalin.)



*H. C. [unclear]*



On the twentieth anniversary of *Pravda*, the government organ, a parade and giant posters emphasize the fact that "the press must serve as an instrument of socialist instruction."



which had behaved well on many occasions, the sort you you might give your twelve-year-old son.

I wondered whether Stalin's windows faced the setting sun or whether he worked in a windowless room for fear of assassination. Should I take flash-lamps? That meant one more series of implements with the proportionately increased number of things that could go wrong. What about the batteries? Had they gone dead as they so often do? I shot one vacuum lamp in the room. It worked. I packed up forty lamps. A suspicious-looking package!

There are fanatics the world over who would willingly die for the publicity of having assassinated Stalin—and they are no crazier than photographers! What a spectacular ending to my career, after all!

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## CHAPTER IV

### *SHOOTING STALIN*

**I**T DIDN'T require a revolution to collectivize Russian curiosity. A Moscow sidewalk can be turned into an auditorium, a clinic, a circus with incredible swiftness. At four-twenty-five I stood ready on the curb in front of the hotel, bag and baggage. A hawk-eyed inspection committee of matted peasant beards, razor-bald proletarian heads, smelly sheepskin coats, shawl-wrapped women and street urchins surrounded me.

The hotel porter lost no time in informing my audience that Stalin was sending a car for me, that I was to be received by the Big Man in the Kremlin, that I had come all the way from America at his request, that my entire life had been devoted to rushing from one country to another for the sole purpose of photographing the rulers. That porter was a born press agent. He not only built me up as a man as important as Stalin, but built himself up as important as I was.

Stalin's car arrived punctually, a uniformed GPU soldier at the wheel, a plain-clothes man beside him, and Comrade Neumann, of the Foreign Office, stepped out from behind the curtained rear seat to greet me.

It was not as swanky an equipage as I had conjured up, but a seven-passenger Buick touring car, two or three years old, without even the Hammer and Sickle of proletarian dictatorship embossed on the door.

The curb crowd was nevertheless properly impressed by the significance of my moment, and I heard them pass the word to each other: "*Eto Kreml auto*, that's a Kremlin auto!" as the porter packed in the big carton of forty flash-lamps.

As I stepped into the car I wished the old Sennett gang from Hollywood had been standing on the curb to see me off, too—all the comedians, bathing beauties, directors, cameramen, trained cats, dogs, monkeys, bears, and the old Irish boss himself. . . .

Neumann gave the signal, and the car started. I'd known Neumann in Paris when he was official press representative at the Soviet Embassy. A tall, young, slightly stooped Jew of German origin, sallow-skinned and slinky-footed. His foxlike face almost registered his amazement at finding himself escorting me to see Stalin. Knowing how I had stalked his master, he could hardly believe his habitually receptive ears when he was given orders to take me in charge. At the same time, like the trained diplomat he was, he established his importance by telling me he had told Stalin's secretary he could vouch for me and would be responsible.

Our car crossed the bridge leisurely, slipped along the avenue between the Moscow River and the Kremlin Wall. There was none of the show-off haste and honking in which Intourist chauffeurs indulge themselves as they drive first-category tourists about Moscow. We stopped obediently for red lights and we kept to our side of the

road just like any ordinary vehicle. Moscow has installed the American system of red and green traffic lights; they looked strange standing out against the medieval background of Moscow's churches and Kremlin walls.

Just before we reached the gate, through which the Czars of old drove into their little walled city, a peasant woman stood in the middle of the street making up her mind. Our chauffeur honked: the kerchief-headed, broad-hipped woman of the soil went straight up in the air. Landing safely on her two big feet, she marched straight to our car with blood in her eye, and gave the chauffeur and the lot of us a piece of her peasant mind. It wasn't at all what I expected as guest of the Ruler of all the Russias; and I asked Neumann if he supposed the old girl knew ours was Stalin's car.

Neumann shrugged his shoulders as we finally pulled out of range.

"It wouldn't have mattered had Stalin been on the front seat," he said. "They're very outspoken, the peasants!"

Making the Russian peasants conform to Bolshevik discipline has been Stalin's biggest task, maybe too big even for him. I was later to see peasants starving to death rather than grow wheat for collective farms.

The ancient moat around the Kremlin has been filled in and made into a sunken park on the south side of the triangle. At the approach to what should have been a drawbridge, we were halted by a bayonet. Neumann produced a pass for the four of us, we all pulled out our identification papers, and were passed on to the arched gate in the thick brick wall. Two bayonets barred our way there, and we submitted to a thorough examination.

An officer of the guard was summoned; he weighed the possibility of my flash-lamps being death-dealing bombs, my two hand cameras automatics and myself an assassin. I asked Neumann if he had to go through this business each time he passed through.

"It's you who arouse suspicion," he said, "there's no precedent for a photographer, foreign or Russian, no precedent for any foreigner claiming to have a Kremlin appointment with Comrade Stalin!"

When the Red Army officer had written down an exhaustive account of the record of movements as inscribed in my passport, he clicked his heels, the soldiers came to attention and we passed through. With all the thoroughness I had so far encountered at the Kremlin gate, I wondered how nobody had unearthed the record of my arrest in Moscow five years earlier, when I was picked up for taking forbidden photographs in the Sun Yat Sen University—where Chinese youth are trained intensively for proletarian revolution before being shipped back to China to start trouble. The longer you work as a roving press photographer, the more ghosts of your past keep sitting down at some table where an official is about to sign a permission of some sort.

So this was the Kremlin, Communism's Holy of Holies, the fortified watchtower from which Stalin was railroading the world to collective living—or trying to! There is a Kremlin in hundreds of Russian cities, yet the outside world thinks of but one—in Moscow. The walled-in palaces, churches, barracks, arsenals, living quarters for privileged high officials, executive offices of supreme command, bustling with activity, were a figurative power plant from which the high tension wires of

Bolshevism carried the electric load of revolution to the far corners of the globe.

Here I was in the midst of it, headed for the Chief Engineer who sat at the switchboard. The whole vast force under his sole control.

Push this button and an army of workmen starts building a huge steel mill in the far-off Urals. Pull that lever and half a million Red Army soldiers scurry to the Manchurian frontier six thousand miles away. Sign an order-slip and his shoot-to-kill GPU men round up 100,000,000 peasants and tell them that from now on they'll grow wheat in gangs, turning over to the government all they grow except a pittance for their own use. Reach for a telephone and order a thousand, ten thousand, one hundred thousand human beings executed for not conforming to his orders. Turn to an assistant, and, in perfectly even tones, have a few million men, women and children, a whole town at a single trainload, sent to prison, to Siberia—or a few thousand more priests sent to the heaven they persist in believing in.

Stalin the sinister, cold as the steel his name indicates, asking for reports, not advice, making his own decisions, with their dizzy responsibilities; self-delegated recluse, guarded, mysterious, uncommunicative. Would he just stand up there in front of his switchboard and let me photograph him, without opening his mouth, without taking his eyes off me? What would I find to say to him, with my limited command of Russian? How would I address him? I couldn't say Your Highness as I had to the King of Sweden; I couldn't call him by his first name as I did Jack Dempsey when he was champion of the world; I couldn't call him Mr. President as I did later

If the periodicals obtainable at the newspaper stands are too limited to attract many buyers, the bookstalls, on the contrary, draw a great many fanciers, especially university students.







FORBIDDEN. I was arrested for taking this railway scene. Starved peasants wait week-long for trains to some objective they vainly imagine is the Promised Land where they may find enough food to keep alive.

when I grasped the hand of President Roosevelt, nor *Excellencia* as I did Primo de Rivera, the Dictator of Spain, nor *Señor General* as I did Calles, the Dictator of Mexico. I couldn't either avail myself of the foreigner's privilege as when I called the Führer *Herr* Hitler. Duranty's idea was to call him *Monsieur* Stalin; it did not seem quite right. Should I address him as *Tovarisch*, the Russian word for Comrade? No, I wasn't a Communist, one of his comrades. I asked Neumann what I should call him. Even the diplomatic Neumann was puzzled, and finally said:

"Just call him Mr. Stalin."

I had not believed there was a spot in mad Moscow as quiet and orderly as inside the Kremlin walls, an island in the midst of the pushing, crowding, pedestrian millions who insisted on disputing the right to the middle of the street with the autos, trucks and trams. I could hear the packed and jammed trams clanging and rumbling along just beyond the walls—and, a rifle-shot across the river, was my hotel. I picked out my own window where I'd gazed over to this forbidden ground, sometimes longingly, again disconsolately, then expectantly, dejectedly, but never quite without hope of landing where I now was.

What did all those canvas covers conceal, right there in the square surrounded by churches? Aha! One cover was partly off! A French seventy-five! Some three or four batteries of them, on quick estimate. My last experience with those efficient pieces of artillery had been in a Mexican revolution. These guns inside the Kremlin were standing by in case of counter-revolution, symbols

of the force necessary to keep any government established.

I wondered what the high officials who lived in those elegant Kremlin residences did nights? Did they visit each other and play poker, while their wives phoned first one apartment and then another to learn what time their men would get home? Were big-shot Bolsheviks henpecked? Was fearless Stalin afraid of his wife?

It was not more than a minute's motoring from the gate to the palace where Stalin worked, but I still remember in vivid detail my sixty seconds' worth of thoughts until we glided up in front of Stalin's front door. The only stipulation Neumann made was that I never disclose the location of Stalin's office or describe the exterior of the building; he added that very few of the several thousand persons living and working within the Kremlin walls know which windows are Stalin's! Rulers must waive a lot of the privileges of us ordinary folk; I'm sure I've had more fun hanging out of windows than Stalin has ruling.

We passed more soldiers at the marble entrance. Then up marble steps, Neumann, the chauffeur, the plainclothes man and I, each carrying some piece of photographic baggage. Surely the strangest procession which ever entered that palace.

What! No elevators!

All those deployed bayonet-boys kept their bayonet eyes on me. Nice-looking boys, though: young, pink-cheeked, broad-shouldered, well-groomed in their uniforms. The corridors suggested a hospital. No decoration, no paintings, no trophies. Clean as wax, and tinted pale green. (Why not red?)

Finally we passed out of the military area. Now, glimpses of offices through wide-opened doors: men in civilian clothes sitting at desks, smoking, bending over papers, and handing documents to clerks. No women, that I saw: Stalin's looked like a stag set-up. The office workers certainly didn't resemble those I had seen in Soviet trust, bank or industrial headquarters. Nothing in their dress to mark them as headquarters staff: just more efficient-looking . . . keener faces . . . snappier movements . . . less harassed-looking. . . .

The plain-clothes man was leading the way; apparently Neumann had never been there before! We finally filed through the open door of a spacious office. There were two desks, a man behind each. I was introduced as "Meester Abbe, Amerikansky photograph" and we were all escorted into an adjoining office, similar to the first. The chauffeur and plain-clothes man put my bits and pieces right in the middle of the floor: these lads seemed amused at me and my impedimenta.

They were all big men; they looked like giants as they grouped themselves about me and my sample-cases and they acted as if they expected me to open up my knapsacks and bring forth egg beaters, feather dusters and sets of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

There were four of them left, after the chauffeur and plain-clothes man had reluctantly departed. The four separated Neumann and me from my bags and herded us into a third and still larger office. I was evidently almost at my journey's end, because the man who rose from his desk and extended his hand was introduced by Neumann as Stalin's secretary.

There was something about that secretary which sug-

gested a kindred spirit. His handclasp, his smile, his look of understanding or something I couldn't quite make out. Then he began asking me questions in photography that made me think he had studied up on the business. No—it was much more serious than that. The man was a photographer—not an amateur but a small-town professional who admitted he had once told the village children to “Watch the birdie!” He was short, heavy-set, round-faced and about thirty-five; his meager hair was ruffled as if he had just pulled his head out from under a focusing-cloth. He wore a two-piece unpressed suit that had not recently come from the cleaners. He handed me a cigarette from a loose bunch in his coat pocket; we lit up and got down to business. His fingers were stained a rich brown from developing solution. Would he mind telling me how he found time to develop or even shoot pictures, while working as Stalin's secretary? He was vague about how he found the time to work at his legitimate profession, but convincing when he said he had never photographed his boss!

“Comrade Stalin has no time for photographs,” he volunteered.

And I hoped out loud that Comrade Stalin had allotted enough time for me to do a proper job. To which question he smiled and shrugged his dandruffy shoulders.

Try as I would, I couldn't worm out of him how in hell his photographic background had fitted him to become private secretary to the ruler of 160,000,000 people.

Where was my camera? he asked. I produced my two little weapons, as well as a flash-lamp, which fascinated him.

"What! No smoke, no noise, no ashes!" he exclaimed. "Wonderful people, the Americans!"

(I didn't tell him the lamp had been invented by a German in Munich.)

Suddenly he looked at his watch, a fat nickel affair which he had dragged out of his trousers pocket, and told me I had better get ready, as it was five minutes before the appointed hour, 5 P.M.

We smoked and talked up to the last second, and then —

The little bells in the Kremlin Tower ran gaily down the scales, once for each quarter of the latest hour in Russian history. A pause, in which I wondered if there ever had been a single hour since the Tower had been built which had not struck terror into somebody's soul. The big bell boomed five times. My hour had struck!

Stalin's secretary shot me a significant glance, then reached for the blue glass handle of the massive door to the great man's sanctum. Comrade Neumann grabbed the mounted camera and a suitcase of ammunition, while I clutched the small camera in my left hand, keeping my right free for a handshake with Joseph Stalin. The door closed quietly behind me, the secretary without!

Stalin's private office was the longest I've ever seen . . . and there he sat behind his desk at the far end! I tottered off on the long trail across the polished floor. Possibly I *have* seen a longer office, but I cannot remember where. Possibly, too, I did not totter. But, discovering myself actually on the job I had planned so long, I went a bit too groggy to judge distance or record leg-variations.

Stalin picked me up the moment I appeared on the

horizon. And hanged if he didn't rise and walk to meet me, just about as I'd seen him do in the mirage in Berlin!

As soon as I saw the whites of his eyes, I recognized that Stalin has the surgical ability to remove a man's thoughts from his head and sort them out on the table. The table was ready, too. It stretched half the width of the office.

They say a man reviews his entire life within the minute required for drowning. During the fifteen seconds it took me to traverse the room I reviewed, at least, all my bourgeois acts since earning my first dollar with no thought of sharing it with my fellow men. One thought I'd have preferred to roll off the table unnoticed was that only a month before that moment I'd been photographing the arch enemy of Communism, Adolf Hitler, in the *Braunhaus* at Munich.

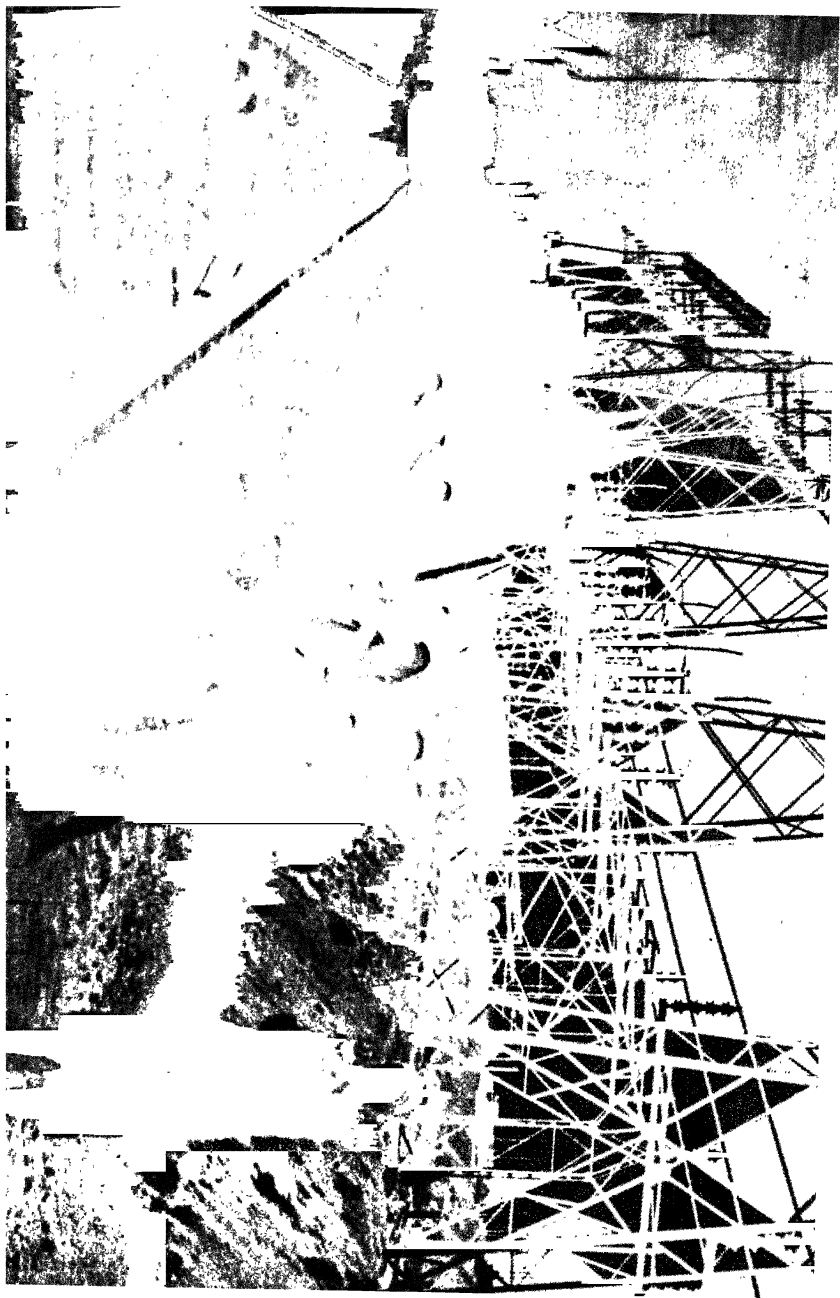
As Stalin approached, my brain refused to suggest how I must address him. But when the hand which reaches around the world finally grasped mine in a firm clasp the best I could do was to stammer: "S-t-a-l-i-n, S-t-a-l-i-n." He seemed surprised, but did not correct me; he smiled and that smile revived me. It suddenly struck me the man was human! I've never asked more of man, woman or child. It's "human" to smile, scowl, love, hate, kill and die: Stalin looked the sort who could do all those things.

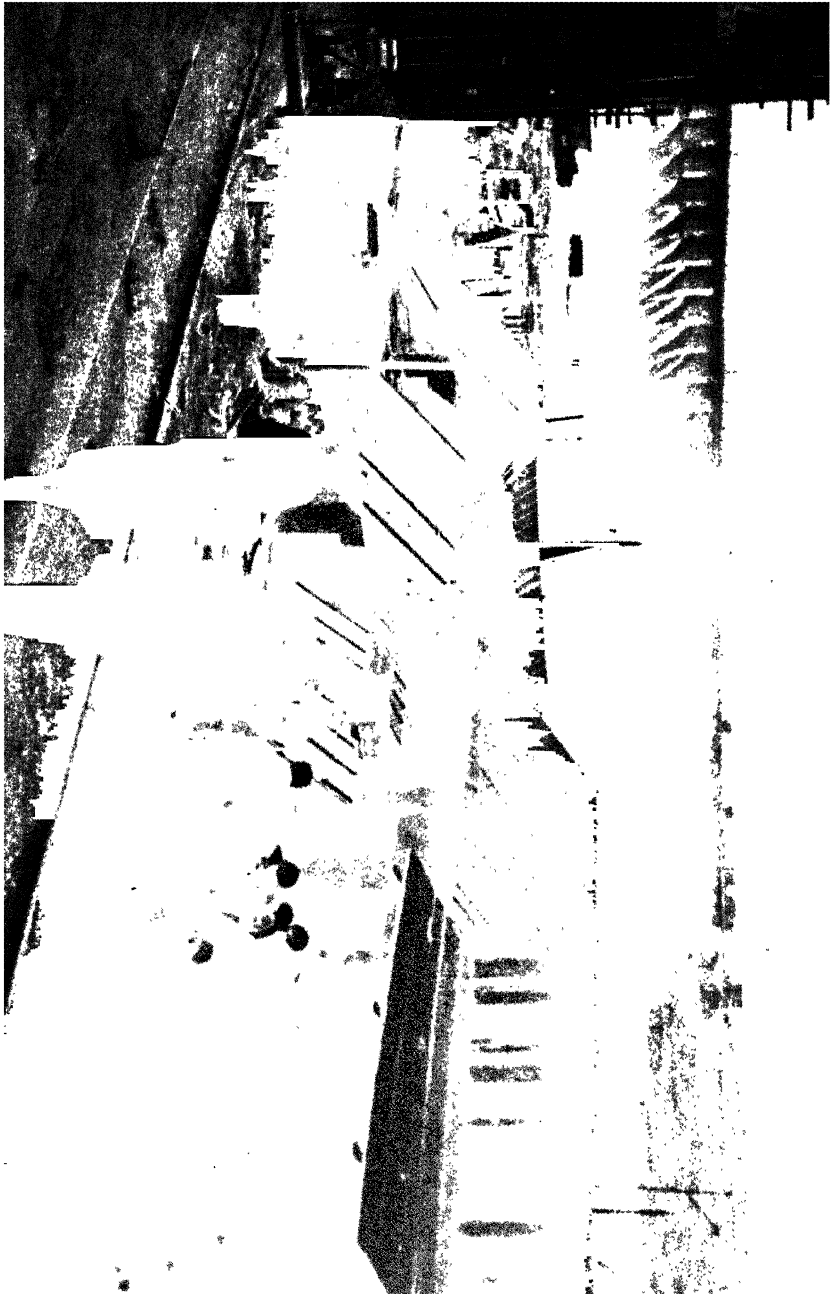
For a moment we stood there looking each other over.

Stalin was dressed with no attempt at "making up" to look proletarian, as I have seen so many others do who considered it expedient. He is and always has been a professional revolutionist, not a manual laborer. He wore a simple gray tunic of excellent material, which looked



Imported foreign engineers agree that the women workers are far more efficient and dependable than the men. A camera reporter who has photographed Hollywood bathing beauties will find little pulchritude here but plenty of brawn.





FORBIDDEN. Photographing any queue is taboo, especially a food queue. At his risk and peril, the writer caught this view of a line forming he dare not tell how long before the stores opened.

like gabardine, with outside pockets: no decoration or "lodge pin"; riding breeches to match; old-style, soft, pliable black leather high boots. His whole outfit looked made to order by an expert tailor: the collar fitted his powerful neck very snugly. I could imagine him in the hands of his tailor, making no suggestions, not even glancing into the full-length mirror to see how he looked in his new suit of clothes. It would be the same with the barber.

He has a heavy head of black hair shot with gray. It doesn't go wild like the hair of the Union Square revolutionists or the parlor Bolsheviks who go about disguised as orchestra leaders. There is nothing of the fanatic about Stalin; he is just a deliberate, persistent calculating person whose faculties coördinate. He hasn't a feature or a physical characteristic which isn't commensurate with his record.

His whole make-up, so far as I could see, registered strength. A fine stipple of pockmarks covered his face and neck; they suggested his powers of resistance. He had fought a deadly disease, for instance, and had won. Somehow, the pockmarked effect did not disfigure him. In fact, it was becoming.

In profile the back of his head is almost delicately modeled, but there his delicacy stops, and abruptly. The rest of him discloses determination, no consideration for the feelings of others, no indulgence of his own. His head sits him like a high-spirited cavalry stallion's! I could imagine him snorting at the smell of powder. I could also imagine the large nostrils of his aggressive nose dilating at the proximity of a lady horse. But I could not imagine him losing his head over man, woman or

beast. His mouth is large, firm and uncompromising, his full face Asiatic-Semitic looking; his dark, small, cunning eyes tell the story of a man who sat back, cool and calculating, while his famous enemies jockeyed and fought for power, then who struck in the nick of time, seized the reins of control, and crushed the others ruthlessly.

His smile is spontaneous and effortless, but from the pinnacle of power where he sits, I doubt if he sees much that amuses him, little to smile at and nothing to laugh about.

I couldn't conceive of a better example of an under dog who got on top and immediately realized that under dogs must be kept in their places. He rules, dictates, listens to advice and makes the decisions himself. There has been a catch in every compromise he ever made. He reefs sail in a blow, tacks, would even go so far as to heave to and ride out a storm. But he would go down with all hands before agreeing to change his course.

Certainly I would not like to confront Stalin harboring the least little lurking intention of putting anything over on him. The reader should not jump to the conclusion that, because I caught him on his affable day, gracious and obliging, I saw no signs of the steel from which he derives his name. It is written into every line of face and feature, built into every contour of his head, and is an integral part of every movement of his body.

I judged that Stalin had come to the conclusion that I, too, was human. He knew less about the newly discovered species known as press photographer, than I did about Dictators, whom I had encountered before; but when he discovered that I moved about with my two feet on the

floor instead of crawling lizardlike on the ceiling, it seemed to buck him up. Suddenly he asked Neumann in Russian: "Why does he want to photograph me?"

Then before I could cut in with an explanation, Stalin pulled himself together, and addressing me directly said:

"Scurry, scurry, I can only give you *piat minuti*."

Anna Pavlova had told me to "scurry, scurry" on and off for ten years, but not even in her most temperamental moments had she told me to get it over with in five minutes. This proposed "five-minute plan" so hit my professional pride that I threw discretion to the winds, and somewhat illogically replied that I could hardly be expected in five minutes to photograph the man who was taking five years to industrialize Russia. Neumann hesitated to translate my remark to his Big Boss, but I must have put a lot of feeling into my statement, for Stalin turned and questioned Neumann with a tone that meant business. Neumann nervously translated. Luckily my feeble joke appealed to Stalin, who promised me ten minutes. As a matter of fact he gave me twenty-five in all—which convinces me that you can reason with Stalin.

By that time I had been particularly impressed with three things about Stalin. His eyes, his voice, and his pockmarks. My years of experience in the cinema taught me that eyes are at least seventy-five per cent of any portrait. Stalin had X-rayed me in a few seconds; within a few minutes he had analyzed press photographers, the rôle they play in modern life and the justification for their professional existence. I could imagine the X-ray negatives already developed and filed away in the archives of his mind for future reference. The fact that he had never before submitted himself to a photographic analysis—

and, as this is written, has not done so again—might mean that he had quickly realized what every press photographer knows: that a camera is a weapon, and like all weapons, a tool for attack or defense. The most innocuous-appearing press photographer, therefore, can be a dangerous person to have around if allowed to carry his weapon. So during my entire séance with Stalin I took advantage of every opportunity to watch his eyes, as Jack Dempsey had taught me to do when he gave me impromptu boxing lessons in the heyday of his championship.

When Stalin first asked Neumann why I wished to photograph him, his eyes plainly said that here he was for the first time in his life deliberately taking a risk on a proposition he had not studied beforehand. True, he had agreed to let me photograph him, so he must have given the project at least a moment's thought. But his acquiescence, I am certain, was not due to any sudden change of policy nor to a latent vanity. No—I had stumbled upon the one weakness in the make-up of a strong man. Stalin was fifty-three when I photographed him: for a man to show signs of failing health at fifty-three must strike Stalin as evidence of physical, mental and moral weakness.

As for his voice, I doubt if it had ever been used full force. Had he been Russian, he must have used it at one time or other for singing, for I have yet to see the Russian Slav who never sang a note. But to sing, a man must give play to his emotions at least a little, and I could not conceive Stalin enjoying even that little freedom. Yet Stalin surely is not unemotional? His voice is fairly low in pitch, modulated, resonant but not musical: the very



antithesis of Hitler's which I had heard imbue with significance words that seemed less so in type.

Knowing how short my time was, I suddenly began to talk better Russian than I knew, while Neumann kept trying to explain what I said even when he didn't know himself. Then turning hurriedly to me, he would once more offer to translate if only I stuck to English. But I was well under weigh by then; I felt capable of making myself understood in any old language. Besides Stalin seemed to be enjoying my one-cylinder Russian.

In my eagerness to make the best use of the backgrounds and the waning light, I resorted to pushing Stalin gently here and there. At the first push, Neumann gasped audibly; I caught glimpses of apprehension on his face. Again he reminded me that he would translate any request in an emergency. But translations take time, and the man who has a reputation for never having been pushed about in his life acted as if he actually enjoyed the unique experience. His whole manner seemed to say:

"Well, I've let myself in for a new experience, so I might as well go through with it."

I expect, judging from his chin and jaw, that he generally finishes whatever he starts. A sense of humor, yes: but I doubt if he ever had any real fun in his life. His job as a professional revolutionist, which developed into suppressing counter-revolution and assuming the responsibilities of dictatorships, could not allow much time for fun. The whole crew of big-shot officials who run Russia were trained for tearing down things rather than for building.

When I had jockeyed Stalin into position for my first

shot, set up my little amateur Kodak on a tripod and was ready to focus, I got an awful shock. The trick finder I attach to the side of the camera was missing! The vision of poor old Duranty bewailing my heedlessness flashed through my mind. All the dumb tricks I had ever pulled went through my mind on a streak of forked lightning. I turned, bolted from the room without so much as a word of explanation, for I knew the finder *must* be somewhere in the second office from Stalin's.

Why I wasn't shot by the plain-clothes men in the secretary's office, as I yanked open the big door, is just one of those mysteries. The most natural conclusion for them to have come to was that I had planted my bomb and was making my getaway. But I was too fast. By the time they realized I was not a bat out of hell, but a photographer out of Stalin's office, I had swooped down on my luggage, recovered the finder, and was waving it at them on my way back. Having left Stalin's sacred door ajar, at least I need not establish a precedent by becoming the sole person save Stalin's secretary who had ever opened it.

If Stalin's secretary and comrades looked astonished, Stalin and Neumann looked paralyzed with amazement. There sat the Great Man himself as if he hadn't dared to move from where I had placed him; there stood Neumann dumbfounded behind my camera. Both heads were turned to the door when I reappeared as unexpectedly as I had departed.

Stalin sat at the far end of that long table where momentous conferences had taken place, the green baize lined with typically Russian water carafes, ink bottles, and cigarette boxes—all of them heirlooms of the former

rulers of Russia. Directly over Stalin's head, a portrait of Karl Marx. There was the whole story in one shot: my scoop!

I stopped for a split second in my tracks, further mystifying Stalin and Neumann. Then I hustled to their end of the table to grab my camera and tripod, still without finding the time to explain what had happened to me. When I finally hooked on and looked through that finder, I let out a long and fervent "A-a-a-h!" Far down at the other end the Ruler of all the Russias, a man not given to imitating anybody, mimicked me with an echoing "A-a-a-h!" and then laughed out loud. I waved Neumann out of the shot and recorded Stalin for posterity, portrayed him for all time as he sat in his Kremlin "building Socialism." And I felt better. Stalin felt better, too. But of the three of us, Neumann apparently felt best, for I had got away with murder without having attempted to commit it. Though Neumann didn't realize it at the moment, he was spared the foreign official's job of notifying the American Government that one of their citizens had been shot while acting strangely in the office of Joseph Stalin.

After my long shot I closed in on Stalin, for both photos and observation: Neumann sat across the table and the two of them conversed as I took pictures. Now and then I would ask Stalin to turn this way or that, but I concentrated on his face, head and hands, particularly his left hand which was certified by a military examiner as "withered" and thus saved him from military service during the Great War. For my part, I could detect nothing abnormal about it, but I shall not submit my observation as evidence that Stalin faked his physical

defect, for too many other things claimed my mind for me to devote much attention to one of his hands.

Stalin had none of the little nervous tricks of playing with some object on a table, as I noted with Primo de Rivera for instance; I saw no indication of nerves. His poise reminded me of the King of Sweden, without King Gustaf's impatience. When that nice old Tennis King felt he had enough of being photographed he just went about his business and left me figuratively suspended in mid-air with my camera.

Stalin's pipe lay before him on the table, but he neither smoked nor toyed with it. There was the most enormous box of cigarettes I had ever seen, the Russian tubular type they call *papirosi*; the box was of pasteboard and about a foot long. I subsequently saw Stalin seven or eight times on public occasions; he smoked continuously. But had he been a cigarette fiend, he would not have gone that twenty-five minutes without smoking; he probably didn't know whether or not people are supposed to smoke when being photographed.

Every now and then he would turn and observe me, my camera and my actions with curious interest. Then he would smile. I recalled that he had received only five foreigners since he came into power: Eugene Lyons of the *United Press*, Walter Duranty of the *New York Times*, Colonel Hugh Cooper, consulting engineer of the Dnieperstroy Dam, George Bernard Shaw and Emil Ludwig. All had asked Stalin a lot of questions and estimated him by what he said. What men have to *say* means little to a press photographer: what they *look* like can say everything. You are born into this world with the makings of a face, the ingredients of features; by the time

you are Stalin's age, everything you are and think is set up for the world to look at.

Stalin's office, the palace in which his office is located, the Kremlin itself, are obviously and convincingly the headquarters of a ruler, the Ruler of All the Russias, as the Czars were titled. Call Stalin the Secretary of the All-Russian Communist Party, camouflage his position with such slogans as "dictatorship of the Proletariat," "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," "Workmen-Soldier-Peasant Party," "World-Wide Proletarian Revolution," and when you've run a spotlight over the whole fantastic picture the figure of one lone individual stands out: the man I had before my camera.

I had heard a Nazi speaker in Berlin say that Stalin, while professing his kinship to the proletariat, lived in luxury in the palace of the Czars and rode about in magnificent autos. For all I know his living quarters may be luxurious: any person who lives in a room to himself in Moscow is enjoying relative ease. Stalin's office was spacious, light, airy and comfortable—and comfort is a luxury in Russia. But Stalin has no more use for luxury than I have for a platinum camera. He enjoys the greatest luxury so far devised: power. Nor was it delegated to him by the people: he just took it.

I never photographed a man who had more dignity, though he mimicked me, laughed or smiled as I went performing a job the significance of which escaped him.

After I had got well along with my shooting, I asked him if he would permit me to release the photos without retouching. Possibly he was sensitive about his pockmarks or might want the lines of his face smoothed out, a trick that results in masking a man's character and

giving him a better break. He was again amused and replied with one Russian word, the most expressive one in any language: "*Nitchevo*"—which may be interpreted as: it doesn't matter, if you like, suit yourself, I don't care, it's all the same to me.

He not only didn't care if I showed him up as he is, he didn't even ask to see the proofs. Nor did he, as I later learned, tell Neumann or his secretary or anybody else how his photos should be used. A man has to be pretty sure of himself to take that chance with a press photographer.

As for his physical condition, if his pride in his strength, in his powers of resistance, was the one touch of vanity that impelled him to let me photograph him, he didn't stride about or throw out his chest to impress me or my camera that he was fit. I didn't put a stethoscope to his heart when he said "a-h-h-h" after me, or rap him between the shoulder blades or examine his urine, but once when I was guiding him about I felt his biceps and they were very hard indeed. Taken by and large, his body looked as if it would serve him well for another thirty years with care; yet I believe he would wear it out deliberately in the next ten if he decided the game was worth the candle.

I changed films while Stalin was still conversing with Neumann, and ran my eye over the room. That long table fascinated me. There were twenty-six chairs around it. I visualized them occupied by the nine other members of the *Polit-Bureau*, the executive heads of the whole Soviet show, the men who offer Stalin advice, discuss with him their own work, but accept his decisions as final. No voting at that table, just conference, and, judging from

the number of ash receivers and boxes of cigarettes, they all smoked. I suppose there are men and women in Russia who do not smoke, but I never knew of one. Were they ever served anything to drink more stimulating than the boiled water always handy in the Russian carafes, which, like nearly everything there, are twice the size of those in less grandiose lands?

Stalin's desk over in the corner just back of the first window was placed so that his back was to the wall. An important Soviet official raised in revolution once told me revolutionists always sat with their backs to the wall—a habit formed from the constant fear of being shot, stabbed or bombed from behind. I thought of this when later I photographed President Roosevelt, in the White House, sitting at his desk with his back to an enormous bay window within easy bombing distance from a public highway. We are still amateurs in the ways of violence in this country; I say this after having spent three months with the police in Chicago.

There was the inevitable big map of the Soviet Union on the wall between two of the windows and a portrait of Lenin who had warned the Bolsheviks against letting Stalin usurp too much power. But there were no flaming posters of workmen, soldiers or peasants "building Socialism" with the delight they register—on posters! Nothing about the vast room to suggest that Stalin considered Communism a cult and his sanctum as the abode of its high priest. He left all that, all the trappings, the evidence of ritual, to his underling exhorters. I could imagine Voroshilov, Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, facing Stalin at his desk and proposing a military parade, or Litvinov the Commissar of Foreign Af-

fairs suggesting the big blow-out actually held two weeks later in the Kremlin in honor of the visiting Turkish officials; and Stalin shrugging his shoulders and making them the same reply: "*Nitchevo.*"

Through the windows I could see the bulbous gilded minarets of the Kremlin's seven churches. If I could only wangle Stalin into one of those windows for a shot, with those spires and their gilded crosses into the background, it would make a picture as significant as the one under Karl Marx's portrait. I could see the two shots as a double page spread—to the left the man who started out as Joseph Djughashvili a student at a theological seminary at Tiflis in 1893, gazing out of his Kremlin Palace window thirty-nine years later at the churches he had closed down, looking up at the symbol of the religion he had almost, but not quite, suppressed. On the opposite page, the man called Joseph Stalin under the portrait of Karl Marx whose teachings he followed instead of Jesus Christ's.

A marvelous idea, but I couldn't swing it! Joseph Djughashvili-Stalin suddenly had enough of photos. I protested but was overruled. He had no more time; and neither he nor Neumann countenanced the window shot. I imagine that looking out of the windows—one of the simplest and most delightful of occupations—was one of the many nearly everybody can indulge, except the Red Dictator. I wondered how many of the privileges I enjoyed, going about the world, were not for Stalin?

I had pretty well littered up his orderly office, leaving a trail of unused flash-lamps, cameras, films, tripods, all over the place. Neumann tried to help me; Stalin watched



us, as he called my attention to the fact I had used up twenty-five instead of five of his minutes. I tried to appear apologetic, but he knew I was inwardly gloating over the achievement. A good sport, a good subject; he had made no trouble, shown no temperament, offered no objections. Suddenly I decided to hazard a significant question: had he any message for the American people, for the outside world?

"I am no ambassador from my country," I added, "but I'll be glad to pass on any message or greeting you would care to send."

He froze right up, and, as we stood facing each other, I glimpsed the Stalin who does the ruling, the man who says "*Niyet*—no!" instead of "*Nitchivo*."

"I have no time for political interviews," he answered, "I have a hundred million hectares of land to sow."

Not even the Czars had ever assumed such a direct responsibility as collectivizing all the farms of all the Russias into one big farm. A huge job and going none too well, what with millions starving to death! And that was only *one* of Stalin's responsibilities.

He relented somewhat when I got the fidgety Neumann to tell him what a gracious subject I found him. I volunteered to send him a set of the photos, to which he politely said, "*Sposibo*—thank you!"

It was Red Sunday, the Bolshevik rest day which comes every sixth day, instead of every seventh as with the rest of the world. But for Stalin it was just one more work day, and as I turned to leave with my scoop, he moved back to his desk. A lonely-looking figure, a man who had grasped so much power that he had cut himself

off from humanity. I felt that I had all the best of it as I closed his big door quietly behind me.

In my state of elation upon emerging from Stalin's office, I took it that Neumann was presenting Karakhan to me rather than me to Karakhan.

Karakhan, tall, handsome Armenian, is Russia's ace in dealing with Eastern peoples. With his black goatee, raven hair, perfect teeth, fine physique, Karakhan—whose name in the Armenian language means Black Prince—is the type we would have dreamt of back in Hollywood when the director said, "Get me a foreign diplomat who'll make the women swoon in their seats." He is not only Russia's handsomest diplomat, but her best-dressed man.

He is about as proletarian as King Alphonso of Spain, and not nearly so democratic! A revolutionist, he served his time in prison and exile like all the other hard men who put over the Russian Revolution. But he was born of princely bearing, tastes and inclinations, and displays his good taste by not pretending to be a horny-handed toiler.

In faultless English he pumped me for my impressions of Stalin and it was then I laid the foundation for my act which might be entitled "My Impressions of Stalin." This act, while a great success during its first ten days' run in Moscow, ultimately made me the social bore of the season and was finally taken off the boards a couple of months later when Madame Litvinov said:

"Abbe, for God's sake, forget about your impressions of Stalin. We all know it word for word."

Karakhan had a sheaf of documents in his hand. The Japanese were wading into Manchuria, the Bolsheviks were railroading troops to that frontier, farther from Moscow than Moscow is from New York. The preliminary jockeying for position in the next World War was beginning. This sleek individual had charge of the situation on the Russian side; presumably he was seeing Stalin for a "yes" or "no" on the next move. The man who had a hundred thousand hectares of land to sow would have his sowing interrupted for another few minutes. I can see why Stalin hasn't much time for photographers.

Neumann and I descended and, as we settled back on the cushions of Stalin's car, I heard Neumann heave a sigh of relief.

"Well," I said, "I hope I didn't do any wrong?"

"There were moments," said Neumann, "when I was anxious."

The car slid silently along between the Kremlin Wall and the river. The setting sun turned a fiery spotlight on the British Embassy directly across the delicately tinted water. I wondered what Sir Esmond Ovey, His Majesty's Ambassador, thought about Stalin and his "rabble" as he looked out of his plate-glass window at the Kremlin. His Majesty's Ambassador had never been received by Stalin.

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## CHAPTER V

### *SOCIALISM ALL BUILT*

THE home of Eugene Lyons was a forum of political, economic and social discussion; it was the showplace of Moscow and Gene, at that time correspondent for the UP, used it as a combination home and salon for the Moscow Foreign Colony. The Lithuanian Minister was there, a chubby-faced man who lived well in his snug berth and dabbled in bootleg roubles. There was nice old Doll, holding down two jobs, one as engineering consultant to a Soviet trust, the other as an American midwestern machinery factory representative, whose machines he sold to his trust. Stanley Richardson, the AP correspondent, who hailed from Norfolk, Virginia—the AP had an exclusive hook-up with TASS, the official Soviet Press Bureau, which gave him at least twenty minutes lead on Lyons of the UP. Ken Foss of the Hearst service, on every handout story the Foreign Office Press Censorship Bureau saw fit to let out under the heading of “news.” Joady, too, was present, Stan’s bride, the daughter of an American engineer. Beautiful girl, Joady. And Duranty. . . .

Now, there's a glamour about the life of a foreign correspondent—and I know at least forty who'll read that and swear to murder me. But all you have to do is to listen in on one of their bar conferences or salon discussions in any capital in Europe, and you'll agree with me.

The conversation begins with Yesterday and goes back to the first story each of them covered. Any one of the forty or more I know could write a knockout book on his experiences; not even one of the forty-odd has ever done it. They don't enjoy their fun while they're having it. Only in retrospect.

Gene had been telling about how he covered the Sacco-Vanzetti case. He'd been Red, himself, in those days. He isn't even "pink" now, after five years covering the realities of "building Socialism."

Gene is back in this country now. He reported that two Japanese planes were shot down by Soviet gunners, a story I had on the best authority. But the Soviet and Japanese governments weren't ready to make the incident a *casus belli* so they denied the report. Gene refused to break a confidence and disclose his informant, so he is no longer with the UP.

Stories of, almost similar incidents, stories of news coverings and suppressions under other dictatorships, were going the rounds that afternoon. The room was thick with the smoke of tubular Russian cigarettes. Vodka, served in tall glasses, gave an edge to the conversation.

The phone rang and everybody quieted down. Correspondents are not too tactful when one of their colleagues suddenly leaves a gathering and is handed a cable, for they are all competitors together. As a matter of fact, there isn't one good story a year in Moscow, from a

journalist's viewpoint. But they maintain a certain degree of that tension which exists in Europe, caused by the knowledge that a big story might happen, and, if it did, the Soviet censors *might* let it through in deleted form.

One big advantage pencil reporters will always have over camera shooters is not being obliged to witness the stories they cover. So when Gene talked openly over the phone about going to Dnieperstroy, his colleagues began to squirm. If Gene went, his competitors must go.

The party numbered Gene Lyons; Boris Smolar, roving correspondent of the *Jewish Telegraph Agency*, born a Ukrainian Jew and now an American citizen; Cholerton, scholarly resident correspondent for the *London News Chronicle* and one of the most brilliant students at Cambridge since Disraeli; Lucienni, a Frenchman, ex-professor in the University of Edinburgh and resident correspondent for *Le Temps* of Paris. All young men, brilliant journalists, long students of Soviet Russia, knowing Russian among many other tongues, good companions conversant with the social and political problems of the world.

I borrowed five hundred roubles for the trip; the rouble is officially valued at fifty cents, which would make this loan appear to be for \$250—but there was a catch in that. Almost all the foreigners in Russia, including the diplomatic corps, “bootlegged” roubles, buying them for from twenty to sometimes as high as forty to the dollar, instead of two, which would make my loan amount to about twenty-five dollars in real money. No foreigner in Moscow considers roubles “real money” as they’ve been so inflated that their actual buying-power is pathetic.

This bootleg rouble traffic was a dangerous proceeding

for the natives who sold them for *valuta* with which they could buy food and clothing at the government chain stores, which would not accept the money of their own government. Russians caught bootlegging roubles have been punished with Siberian exile; many of them have been shot; but both the Foreign Office and the GPU winked at privileged foreigners who engaged in the practice, as it gave them a club to hold over us.

By this time I had an assistant, Walter (born Vladimir) Chumak, a young Russian photographer who had written me in Moscow asking for a job. Chumak was one of the sons of a revolutionist who had been executed by counter-revolutionists in Harbin, while trying to get back into Russia from the USA with his wife and three young sons. This entitled him to some consideration in Soviet Russia, although this he had succeeded in somewhat diminishing in one way or another; indeed, when I took him on, the Foreign Office warned me against him, stating that he was "an unscrupulous liar who has been in wrong on every job he has had." However, Walter had been ten years in Detroit, where he had acquired the bourgeois tastes so distasteful to the Soviets; he spoke perfect English and knew his way around. I engaged him, perhaps because I knew he had been kicked out of the Communist Party and might have a few yarns to tell me about the Bolsheviks.

Chumak saw me off for Dnieperstroy. I was "traveling hard" on the local to Kharkov, where I would pick up the correspondents: no amount of wire-pulling could get me a ride on their de luxe train.

"Traveling hard" in Russia can read like the last word in "roughing it" to pampered folk in other lands. As a

matter of fact, it wasn't half as bad as the train ride I once took through the stifling Mexican desert on a rattler loaded down with combustible bombs and wound-stinking soldiers. Third class in Russia isn't unbearable, if you've got your own food and bedding with you. The friendly peasants and workers who keep milling around the country in search of food-spots make capital company, despite their half-starved condition.

"Traveling hard" means uncushioned seats during the day, and uncushioned hard wood benches and bunks at night; more flat wheels than is comfortable, dirty cars, late trains, long waits at tank stations and the ever-present danger of jumping a poorly kept track. Yet there is more real comradeship than exists in the Communist clubs of the big cities, which continually reverberate with the synthetically inspired cries of "*Tovarisch!* Comrade!"

Before the third-class train had got well out of the Moscow train yards, I was made to feel at home by a peasant family returning to the Ukraine. There were the father and mother and three half-grown children, and without waiting to see if I had anything to contribute to the evening meal, they unwrapped a loaf of black bread and asked me to join them. That was all they had, the black bread, except an enormous lump of sugar, a skimpy package of tea and a teakettle—but it was more than many Russian peasants have today.

I joined. But the way their kindly faces brightened when I opened up my lunch-box was something to remember. Butter, goose, hard-boiled eggs, caviar, bottled beer and white bread, topped off with French pastries, looked like manna from heaven to them. At the first station I went with the man to the station for hot water.



At least, the proletarian dictatorship provides plenty of hot water for the native traveler. There is a tap in the wall of every station to which the travelers rush with their kettles where they line up. I never saw a Russian drink a glass of water straight. There is also a shortage of tea, so the tea you get outside the favored tourist hotels just misses being hot water by a faint amber tinge; but it goes for tea with people who have tasted no better for years.

Our little banquet seemed to fascinate the other voyagers; and we were soon a group of ten or twelve suspended from sleeping shelves, sitting on reed baskets, their belongings wrapped like laundry in a sheet. As most of them were from the two-hundred-year-old German colony in the Ukraine, we conversed mostly in the German these folk still speak so well. I had already learned the peasant trick of biting off a chunk of sugar from the enormous lump sugar which weighs about two pounds, holding it in my mouth while I poured the hot tea down my throat—and between words I bit and poured industriously.

They gave the impression that, despite the fact that they'd found no work in Moscow, and their city relatives had found it a strain to divide up food rations with them, to say nothing of sleeping accommodations, things were nevertheless "not so bad" in Russia.

Next morning one of the peasants took me aside and explained their seeming enthusiasm for the dictatorship of the proletariat. He told me in whispers that one ostensible peasant was a GPU and they had to be careful. Then he proceeded to give me the low-down on conditions in the Ukraine, in Moscow and in the USSR in general. In

their village the people had been dying off like rats in a trap for want of food. The men who resisted collectivized farming had been shipped off to Siberia and to forced labor camps all over the Union; those who escaped collectivization were underfed, treated like cattle, except, as he put it:

"The cattle come first because they are better to eat than peasants."

"What do you expect to do when you get back to your village? How do you expect to live?"

"We *don't* expect to live!" he said fatalistically, "we expect to starve to death."

"But," I argued, "populations never completely disappear. Some of you, your children maybe, will survive. Won't the survivors, maybe fifty years from now, become accustomed to Socialism?"

My pessimistic friend shrugged his shoulders: "One might as well work for the landlords as for the Communists or the GPU. We used to have more to eat in the old days."

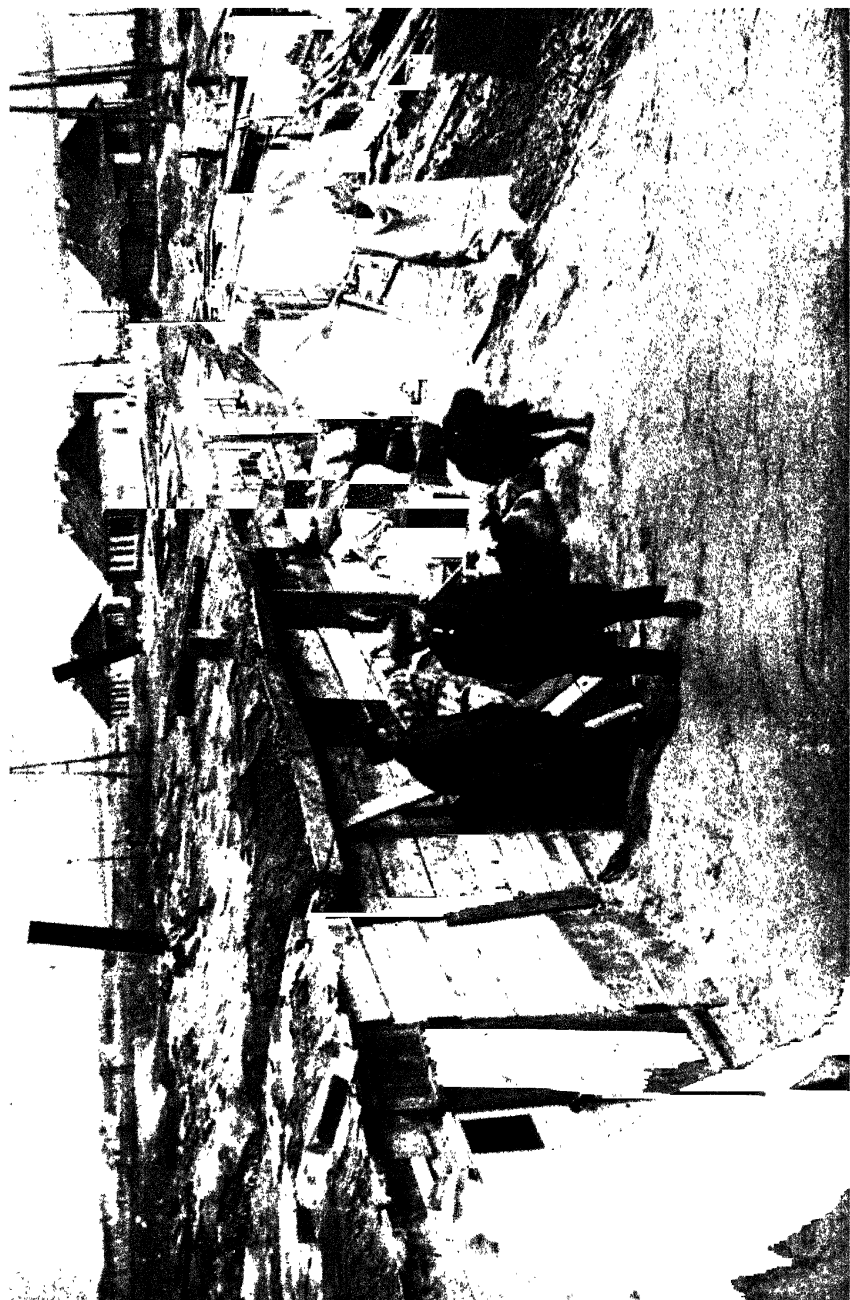
I got up and wandered through the train, and in another car I got acquainted with a Spaniard who was in Russia learning all about Communism so as to return to his sunny land better prepared to start things. When I told him I had once interviewed and photographed Primo de Rivera, his white teeth flashed but not with a smile.

"Pity I hadn't your chance," he said in Spanish. "I would have saved Spain a lot of suffering!"

Finally the train pulled into Kharkov, and we all flowed along the platform and into the station, everybody carrying his own belongings. No obsequious red-cap porters. It reminded me of the way the cattle are

The Dnieperstroy Hospital is a thoroughly modern, perfectly equipped institution. Its x-ray room and maternity ward are models of up-to-date organization, its staff enthusiastic and efficient; a Bolshevnik triumph.





Be it ever so humble . . . This picture shows the homes of the workers on the Dnieperstroy dam and, his back turned, the child of one of them.

driven into the stockyards I had visited in Chicago and of a signboard on one of the packing houses which read:

VISITORS NOT WISHING TO SEE THE  
SLAUGHTER STEP THIS WAY

The visitor to Soviet Russia will not be shocked by such signs. Intourist will guide him deftly around the slaughterhouses and charge him for the privilege.

I'd thought the station in Moscow had been full of sleeping, waiting, inquiring, bread-munching peasants; but the Kharkov station contained double the number per square yard. They wait for days and weeks camped in the stations to get on a train for some objective which they vainly imagine is the promised land. Always with the idea of there being more food beyond the horizon. And this was the Ukraine, the most fertile territory in the whole vast Soviet Union!

My correspondent colleagues fished me out of the human pool in the Kharkov station, all apparently surprised that we had ever kept such an uncertain rendezvous. As we climbed into our first-class coach, I thought of what I had seen, of what the peasants had told me.

"Just the same," I mused, "it isn't fair to compare these outward signs of chaos with regulated America, England or super-regulated Germany. The Bolsheviks are at least working toward a goal whereas the rest of us don't know what to do at the goal we've reached."

When I saw the Dnieperstroy Dam I thought Socialism was all built. I felt like rushing to the telegraph

office and shooting Stalin a wire congratulating him on having successfully industrialized the Soviet Union.

A continual sheet of water half a mile wide and 120 feet high was plunging from a spic-and-span concrete dam where no spic-and-span concrete dam had stood five years ago.

No more convincing picture could be painted of the herculean efforts of a backward people to keep up with the procession of technical progress, than this actual and functioning achievement. And this was no painting, no plan, no paper project.

At my feet a chasm was being shaped into locks to admit vessels up to fifteen feet draft. The river was being made navigable, assuring water transport from Kiev to Odessa—300 miles. This would remove the strain from the railroads, whose inadequacy is perhaps the greatest problem confronting the planners of the industrial state.

The air vibrated from the falling water and was fragrant with the smell of the rich Ukrainian soil. Spray swept toward me as if from the bow of a plunging ship and coated my lens with moisture. The roar was deafening, broken only by the piercing shrieks of puffing and pushing locomotives. On top of the massive structure, the powerful steel arms of movable cranes swung great sheafs of lumber from flat cars to the temporary flooring. The entire top and approaches to the man-made waterfall were alive with brawny men and women. Upstream from the dam, the once turbulent Dnieper River had quieted down into a peaceful blue lake which faded away in the distance. Though it was the high water season of the year the stream was harnessed and under perfect con-



trol ready to generate enough electricity to turn the wheels of industry in Soviet Russia's embryo Ruhr.

If these Bolsheviks could really industrialize their land and then learn what to do with it after industrialization has been achieved, they would indeed have gone far toward realizing "the great experiment."

Beside the nearly finished power house on the right bank, a forest of high tension towers was being strung with wires. On the left bank stood a model city. A long line of new tram cars waited for completion of a line to run across the dam.

As far as I could see in every direction were material evidences of construction, industry, activity. All belied what I had believed in my visit five years before of Russian inefficiency, the Russian tendency to plan and start things on a grandiose scale—and never finish.

Within a radius of nearly four hundred miles there would be sufficient power available for all the factories that were to turn the Ukraine into the world's greatest industrial region. Steel and aluminum plants would produce the materials for construction of factories and housing. An enormous bread bakery was already built, capable of feeding the entire district. Yet there was no bread, no tea, no sugar, no food of any sort in the hotel.

The bread factory struck a responsive note. Many of the young faces looked pinched. In any Western land, the past winter in the Ukraine would have been rated a famine period. Parents and grandparents, short-rationed, had complained against grain collections; only the actual industrial workers had received enough to eat and even their families had suffered.

I crossed on the dam dodging the crane swinging lum-

ber overhead and gingerly avoiding the gaping holes in the temporary wooden flooring. Soldiers were on guard with fixed bayonets every few feet, on the lookout for sabotage or perhaps seeing that the workers kept busy. I inquired if anyone had ever fallen through one of these holes. It seems that had happened more than once.

Turning to look upstream I noticed along the banks of the newly formed lake chimneytops and roofs of houses projecting from below the surface. By that time an engineer who spoke English had joined us and I asked him why, when they had been flooding that area, these houses which were of brick had not been salvaged.

"Ah, there was not time," he said.

"I know," I said, "but you have been five years building this dam."

"Yes, we have been too busy building the dam to worry about what happened to villages."

"Oh, you mean there was an entire village under that lake?"

"Yes, that's Kitchkass, our new submarine village," he said with a laugh. "And that's only one of them. They extend upstream for fifty miles."

Then I suggested that the villagers whose parents and ancestors had lived there generation after generation must have felt very badly to have their homes and towns suddenly put at the bottom of a sea. This further amused him.

"The villagers, like the villages, are all in the past. We are building a new Russia."

Watching from a cliff the living panorama of modern pioneering, I was joined by a group of fifty schoolchildren with their teacher. They had just marched in

through *Enthusiasm Highway*. The amazement on their faces was something to remember; they were seeing the dam for the first time. For fully a minute no word was spoken, as they gazed fascinated at the scene. All of them had been born since the Revolution; they would never know any other régime, if Bolshevism prevailed.

The teacher, a man about thirty-five, stood bareheaded as if before a shrine. Then he mounted a ladder resting against a telegraph pole, raised his voice above the roar of the waters and told his flock what this spectacle meant for their future.

I went down into one of the turbine rooms of the great power house. There I laid my camera down on a table covered with newspapers. I glanced casually at the latter—and jumped! The *Times Herald* of Newport News, Virginia, USA—my home town!—stared at me. I had left all that twenty-two years back; in Soviet Russia, Newport News seemed a mere speck on another planet and my boyhood there a previous existence in another universe.

I was settling down to read what had been happening in the local shipyards where I had played as a boy, when the chief engineer in charge of installing turbines questioned me in accents that reeked of home. He and three others had been sent over from America to install the nine largest hydroelectric turbines ever built, constructed in the same local shipbuilding plant I had known inside and out in the old days.

I looked at the familiar-voiced engineers, and I looked at the dynamo room. Anyone who works intimately with machinery has a love for it. The dynamo room full of windows looked like a sanatorium. And these soft-spoken

engineers were like nurses there to soothe my fears, to tell me that everything was all right and the patient was doing well.

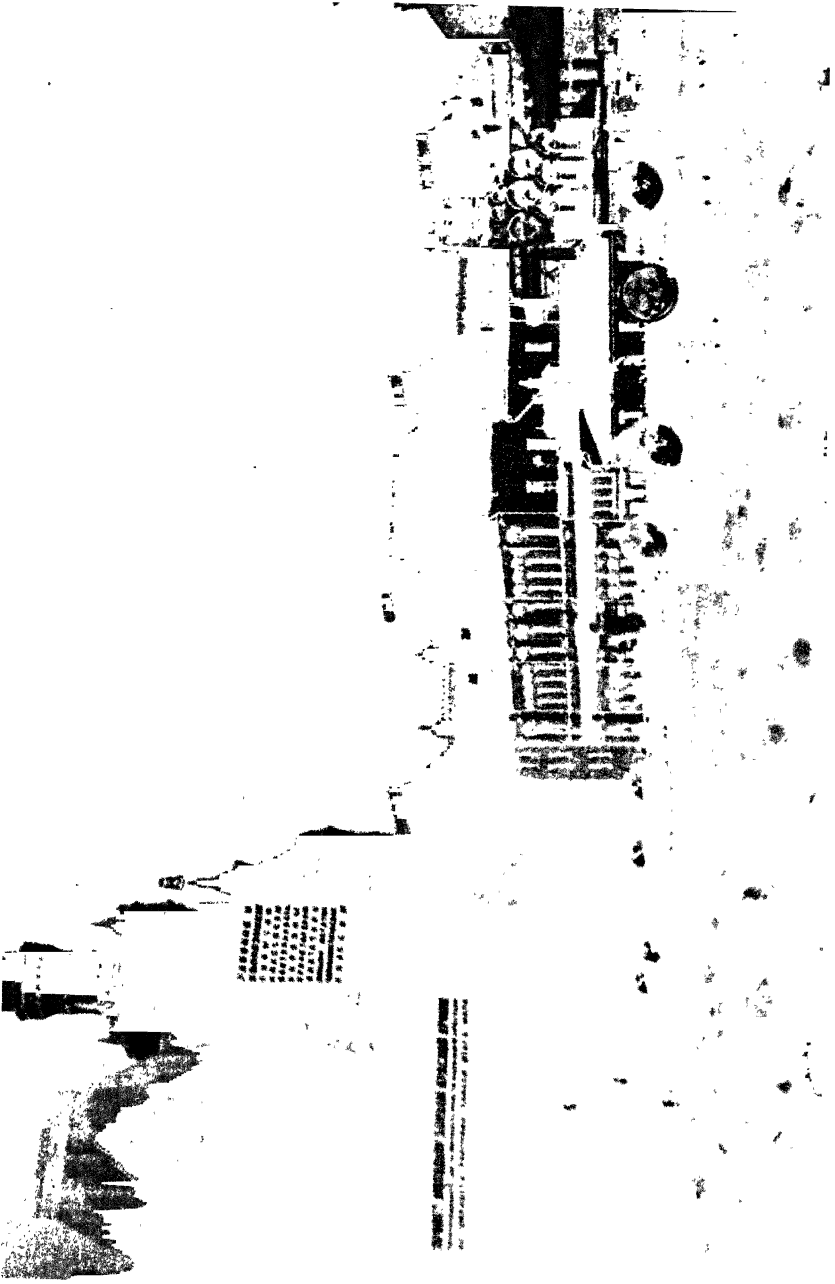
But was it? I didn't hear right away. For Socialist construction and discussion of it were held up for two hours while we discussed home-town doings that would have no interest for the reader.

Finally we got down to the business at hand:

"What's going to happen when the Russians have to handle this machinery without the help of Newport News?" I asked. "Nothing is more susceptible to sand and dust. . . . One of these pieces cost \$100,000 in *valuta*."

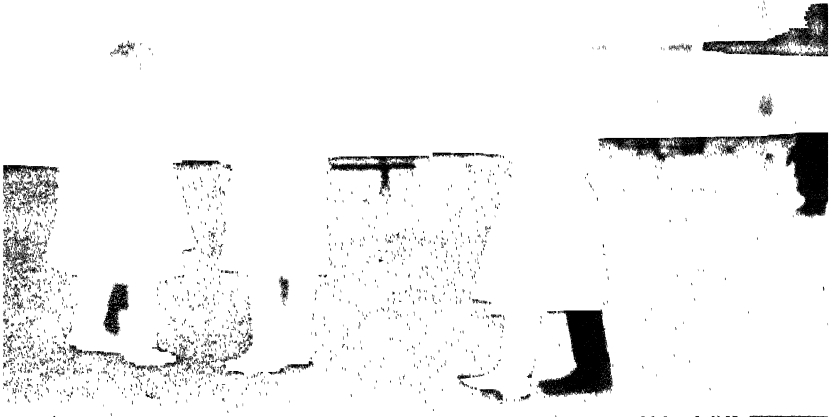
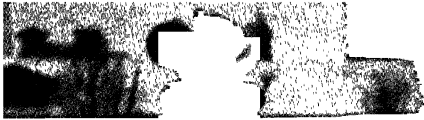
They could not answer this question at the time. They could only speculate. But I did get the answer finally only two weeks before I sat down to write this account. A Washington, D. C., engineer told me that recently, less than two years after I had seen the dynamos installed by my home-town engineers, a group of American experts had been sent to Dnieperstroy to repair them.

On May Day over a million Red soldiers and workers march compulsorily through Red Square. In the foreground are about two hundred privileged ticket holders: correspondents, journalists, diplomats, capitalists. . . .



REAR VIEW OF THE  
BUILDING SHOWING  
THE ENTRANCE AND  
THE STAIRS LEADING  
UP TO THE SECOND  
FLOOR.

THE BUILDING IS  
A TYPICAL EXAMPLE  
OF THE ARCHITECTURE  
OF THE PERIOD.



Balloons may be readily flown at thirty below zero and diminutive Bolsheviks taken out for an airing, though the weight and tightness of the blankets make you wonder if "airing" is the correct word.



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## CHAPTER VI

### RED HOLY DAY

NO," said Comrade Padolski firmly, "you *can't* take photographs on May Day!" And he added: "I can't get you permission, either!"

"I photographed Stalin—why not May Day?" I asked. Padolski spread his hands helplessly.

"You're up against the Photo Trust which has a monopoly," he explained. "Photographing Stalin was a matter of international politics. But photographing the May First celebration is business."

"Who can stop me from going where I like on Red Square and getting my photos?" I asked belligerently.

"Nobody," said Padolski calmly, "except a few thousand *militzi*—civil police—another few thousand GPU men, reinforced by the Red Army."

"Well," I shot back at him as I reached the elevator, "I hope you'll get me out of jail when I get arrested for bucking the Photo Trust."

Moscow looked as if Socialism builders had suddenly gone into their second childhood and taken to cutting out paper dolls, pasting them on enormous sheets of card-

board, setting them up in the public squares and hanging them over the fronts of buildings. Sober-visaged man-sized kindergarten proletarians were squatting on the sidewalks building blocks . . . brass-hatted firemen were climbing ladders with giant banners . . . pedestrians were driving the traffic police frantic by standing in mobs watching the monkey business.

It might have been very gay had everybody regarded the putting up of the decorations as a lark; there would have been dancing on the streets as in Paris on the fourteenth of July or some suggestion of the fun on the eve of Mardi Gras in New Orleans. But no—the Russians, the most playful people on earth, were going about with their preparations as seriously as they do when adding topsy-turvy stories to old buildings or gilding the dome of a church which will be demolished the next week.

Little by little the Bolos will get it into their heads that Socialism could be much more alluring if washed down with vodka instead of being injected as an enforced enema. Workers in the factories, clerks in the offices, children in the schools had been notified that they were expected to join the parade through Red Square, cheer, sing and celebrate their “freedom” . . . and heaven help the “victorious proletarian” who didn’t join the procession!

The first May Day celebration after the Revolution must have been spontaneous and joyful. But fifteen years of eating Red banners and drinking in highly colored posters had taken the edge off their appetite for making whoopee.

Our hotel was packed and jammed with foreign visitors. There was plenty of confusion but no spontaneous

drinking of toasts; many complaints about the overtaxed service but no marching around with paper hats; enough food for everybody but served an hour or two after it was ordered. So the delegations from Germany, England, France and the USA went early to bed, thereby missing a really spontaneous celebration in the last place one might have expected—the *churches!*

Midnight Mass in every church in Moscow ushered in that ambiguous May Day, unannounced by the church bells which had rung out over the Moscow rooftops for centuries. On my previous visit, the air was filled with the caroling of those old bells and in the old days they pealed in unison from churches which numbered *sorok-sorok* forty times forty.

But now, save for the seven Kremlin churches with theirs still intact, the bells have all been melted down and cast into gadgets devised to go one step further in mechanizing a civilization that is officially anti-religious. Still Moscow did not need the bells that May night of 1932.

It was a strange scene that I saw, hanging from my hotel window looking out upon the street: a great people who had rejected God and embraced atheism were simultaneously celebrating the triumph of both! While regiment after regiment of the Red Army poured through the dark streets to keep their May Day rendezvous with the Kremlin, every church and chapel in Moscow was ablaze with light and filled to overflowing with a devout multitude, chanting in praise of their resurrected Lord. I seemed to hear the echo of those old bells as I reflected that not only the Soviet-Jewish Antichrist himself, but also the religious leaders, must have been astonished at

the endless throngs that crowded through the streets and flocked to Easter Midnight Mass.

I knew that most of these worshipers would march through Red Square later in the day, even behind anti-religious banners; for the May Day parade of the proletariat is a command performance, organized long in advance and well do the workers know that failure to appear in the ranks is not a wise procedure.

Putting on my coat, I slipped out of my hotel and into a Russian Orthodox cathedral hardly believing my eyes at the sight of the scene so familiar to openly religious countries. Down the long aisle, holding in his hand the scepter of his office, his head crowned with a towering miter, came the Bishop, dominating the solemn procession of bearded clergy clad in the most gorgeous and ornate vestments. Preceding them, the altar boys and acolytes were swinging golden censers whose fragrant incense slowly spread throughout the congregation. Behind the priests came men and boys in cassocks and surplices, carrying enormous lighted candles in gold or gilded candlesticks. The singing and chanting, in which all the worshipers took part, was spontaneous and inspiring, and almost continuous.

If I had witnessed this outburst of religious fervor, and that in the streets outside among the peasantry, far from the seat of rigid governmental control, it would have been strange enough. But here in Moscow, the focal center of atheism, right under the nose of the GPU, it was a revelation.

That night there was not enough space in the eight hundred churches still standing in Moscow to accommodate the worshipers. Multitudes stood outside in the

streets praying and crossing themselves constantly. The *militzi*, who had received no orders to suppress such a religious demonstration on their own Holy Day, seemed bewildered. But, as there was no disorder, they saw no occasion to interfere. Still they knew, and the religious throngs knew that they knew, that anyone who allies himself openly with religion in the Soviet Union is taking the chance of being labeled "counter-revolutionary." Yet here were thousands boldly and openly taking that risk.

I pictured the Metropolitans, Bishops and priests secretly, *very* secretly exulting next day at the showing for Christianity . . . and Comrade Smirdovitch, head of the anti-religion forces, nervously shifting from one foot to the other next day, as he tried to explain to unsympathetic officials just how he had happened to allow the possibility of such a demonstration.

When the first rays of the rising sun had brightened the Red flag which waved over the House of Government, the *militzi*, in their long gray coats with blue stars on their collars, were already formed to bar the populace within a quarter-mile of Red Square. Only those with tickets could pass the lines.

Moscow was cleaned up as I had never seen it: for three weeks this had been going on, with elaborate decorating of buildings. Now a small army of men and women with brooms was putting the finishing touches to the Square itself. Tram and auto traffic was not permitted to circulate within the restricted area, people were beginning to gather behind the *militzi* to secure places for seeing the pageant hours later.

They had survived the terrible winter in Moscow and many had let off suppressed steam in the churches the

previous night; they were in a mood to celebrate spring. Now they were ready for the biggest annual show of Red Russia—and the Russian loves a good show above all else!

Soon they would sing, they would carry banners, they would march triumphantly through Red Square. And, when the excitement had finally died away, those few who could afford the luxury would fill themselves with vodka and lie peacefully and unmolested in the gutters, celebrating the casting off of the chains of slavery made possible by the Revolution, or drowning their sorrowful reactions to the newly forged proletarian chains—according to the point of view.

It was five minutes to nine as I pushed my way through the massed throngs on Red Square. Every holder of the coveted tickets was in place, the *Who's Who* of Moscow. Bureaucrats, who know how to wangle things, waited proudly, distantly, in their places. But they took second place to the foreign diplomats, correspondents, delegations and tourists who had bought tours in bourgeois cities entitling them to a Red Square May Day ticket as an inducement to disgorge their coveted *valuta*. The masses were resigned to waiting in obscure sections of the city and marching in the parade instead of reviewing it.

Near the Kremlin Wall I edged my way past the white stone tribunes, which held the upper five thousand who rated the best seats and into the diplomatic and press tribune. The press tribune was next to the marble tomb of Lenin, which serves as the official reviewing stand. The ambassadors and diplomats from capitalistic countries sat with enigmatic faces as they looked out over the tribune parapet at the announcement painted in five lan-

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We have nothing to lose but our chains” is the slogan of the workers on their carefully marshalled and obligatory parades. Filing through Red Square they must look as if they *were* “breaking their chains.”

•







Pioneers, organized to sell Loan Certificates for the second five-year loan. Subscription is of course voluntary, but Heaven help the man who doesn't buy at least one, unless he enjoys being practically an outcast!

guages on huge red banners which covered the entire hundred-meter front of the building opposite:

LONG LIVE THE WORLD WIDE  
PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION!

On the sidewalk under the banners stood the secondary grade of the proletarian hierarchy and in their midst a couple of thousand *valuta* visitors. In the center of the scrubbed and polished Square two military bands of a hundred pieces each were drawn up. Rimmed around were the *militzi*, their gray helmets making them appear suspiciously like the police of bourgeois countries. Yet the word "police" is not included in the Bolshevik vocabulary. The memory of Czarist police and the police of capitalistic countries inspired the newer and more sympathetic epithet.

The swiftly warming sun spread an indiscriminate blessing upon the revolutionists, hostile and sympathetic visitors, the leaning, neglected cross of Jesus atop the highest pinnacle of minareted St. Basil's Cathedral (now an antireligious museum) and the still brightly gilded, double eagle of the Czars, high above everything on the Kremlin clock tower.

Presently a whisper rippled and rose through our section; the uniformed company of GPU men in the walk behind our tribune suddenly came to life and scrutinized the faces which turned automatically toward the Kremlin Wall:

"STALIN!"

At the foot of the wall along the walk behind the grassy graves of revolutionary heroes—among them the bodies

of my fellow countrymen, John Reed and "Big Bill" Haywood—came the most exclusive group in the Soviet Union, the members of the *Polit-Bureau*, Stalin one pace ahead. A single outsider brought up the rear: the tall, cadaverous, shaggy-maned form of Maxim Gorky in a broad-brimmed black Borsolino hat.

Wearing a long olive-green military coat and a semi-military cap, unhurried, with no show of enthusiasm or self-consciousness, walked Joseph Stalin, the "Ruler of All the Russias."

Without general acclaim or salute, he mounted the marble steps of the Tomb from the rear and, followed by his group, took his stand, swept the gathering with one glance, and immediately dominated the scene.

I looked out over the sea of faces focused on the tribune. I have seen many world-renowned figures in public, but none who was regarded by a public gathering as was Stalin. I have seen Charlie Chaplin appear on the balcony of the imperial suite at the Crillon and bow to cheering throngs in the Place de la Concorde . . . Mussolini making a dynamic and dramatic appearance before his frenzied public in Rome . . . Theodore Roosevelt whipping a crowd into an orgy of indignation against "malefactors of great wealth" . . . Lindbergh, when he faced the unprecedented mob of hero-worshippers in Paris . . . and Hitler as he gravely stood in the window of the Reichs Chancellery in Berlin sobered by victory and borne up on the adoration of the jubilant, torchlighted Nazis.

There was neither love nor hate, adulation nor contempt, to be seen on the faces turned toward Stalin. If he had been walking before the Kremlin Wall to be ex-

ecuted, I venture to say that the single enigmatic expression on the many thousands of watching faces would have been duplicated on the faces of the witnesses. One can measure the ordinary public acclaim, but to describe the *power* of Stalin's personality is beyond any words I can utter. One simply feels the force the man wields.

A mild scattering applause quickly died away as Stalin took his place; but he seemed not to hear it. By his side, in striking contrast, was the aged figure of Red Russia's seventy-year-old figurehead President, "Papa" Kalinin, the nominal Head of the Government. Kalinin (Mikhail is his first name) is a kindly old bearded man of peasant origin and a rarity among Soviet officials because he is Russian-born. He had a long revolutionary career, this titular head of one-sixth of the world's surface and, like all the big Russian leaders, served his time in Czarist prisons as an agitator. Now he is merely "Papa Kalinin" or "Uncle Mischa" to the peasants he understands so well: his job consists mainly of acting as a sort of middleman between peasant and proletarian, smoothing out their differences and attending personally to their grievances—I wondered what he thought of the wholesale murder of his own kind which goes on hourly, daily, year-in and year-out in the country he is supposed to run. Yet this mild little old man is one of the few who have dared differ with Stalin and have remained in office (or on earth) for such boldness. He opposed Stalin's former policy of spreading revolutionary propaganda abroad and lived to see his views on this important subject become ostensibly a party policy.

This was his one big moment of the year. Silence reigned as he took his place in the tribune beside his real

chief. As the ninth boom of the Kremlin clock died away, a battery of artillery cracked away a salute behind the Kremlin walls.

Again silence.

There came a swift clatter of horses' hoofs on the cobble Square. An old revolutionary comrade of Stalin's, Klementy Voroshilov, Commissar of War and Marine, galloped up on an archnecked stallion, reined up before the reviewing party and, keeping his muscular arm stiffly at salute, announced in a resonant voice:

"The Army and Navy is ready. Long live the world-wide proletarian Revolution!"

The twin military bands struck up the *Internationale*. Everyone saluted or uncovered.

Voroshilov, darkly handsome, dashing smart, dismounted, motioned an orderly to lead away his charger and joined the reviewing party.

Silence again.

Suddenly one of the bands struck up a march . . . and then came the Army!

Regiment after regiment of Red Army and GPU infantry . . . galloping cavalry, headed by picturesque, fiery old General Budienny . . . horse-drawn light artillery . . . rumbling, lumbering tanks . . . motor-drawn heavy artillery . . . searchlight brigades . . . bicycle troops . . . ambulances . . . while overhead three hundred heavy airplanes roared in mass formation.

For two hours the military passed in solid ranks and the privileged in the tribunes as well as the hoi polloi on the sidewalks stood and watched. They were not allowed to sit down. Whatever the religion in Russia—whether it be Christianity or Communism—the poor old

Russians have to do a lot of standing up on their Holy Days. Even the visiting Turkish delegation, the de luxe guests of the government, had to stand. Their group of thirty or so was composed of the very highest officials of the Turkish Government, who had been fêted and dined in Moscow for a week until they were in no condition to stand. But stand they did, in frock coats and lounge suits, in the reviewing section specially built for them between our tribune and the Tomb. Only one man in the entire Red Square assemblage had the audacity to sit down—Maxim Gorky. He rested on a stone block of the Tomb and on his laurels as a financier for the old revolutionists before they came into power.

Finally the military had passed and the British Ambassador and his staff and their wives made a graceful exit. The other diplomats followed and many correspondents weakened. But Stalin and the Soviet Government, trained to "take it" in the old days, stood strong on top of the Tomb. The Turks stood fairly strong below. Old "Papa" Kalinin remained bravely by Stalin's side, but his aged saluting arm was growing visibly tired.

The Army had marched by in compact, flawless formation, but after them came an ambling tidal wave of the proletariat, a hundred abreast. Men, women, children, workers and peasants and thousands of minor bureaucrats bristling with importance; Red flags and bands whose instruments were not as chic as those of the military; propaganda placards and fluttering banners with their naïve, boy-scoutish slogans, held high above their heads proclaiming the equally naïve idea that they were the "dictators" of Russia—while *their* Dictator and his even more dictatorial underlings stood and watched them.

When the proletarian army arrived, Kalinin started cheering. He waved his hat, his hand. Finally, his handkerchief. He saw people he could recognize; you would have thought he had gone to school with the entire million and a half.

But the two millions could not hold the rest of their audience; they were not showy enough. The tribunes began to thin out after the first half-hour of the march of the proletariat; after an hour Stalin himself retired to the rear of the Tomb for a cigarette with Gorky, returning anon to review his Comrades.

Suddenly there was a break in the ranks of the GPU massed behind the main tribune, and coming toward the tribune I saw a well-built, pleasant-faced woman attired simply in a tailored dress and coat.

"Madame Stalin!" whispered a journalistic confrère, and I raised my camera for a shot of the Red Dictator's since deceased wife. And from out of the crowd which I had supposed consisted of press and diplomatic representatives only, came a long GPU arm. And a firm hand grasped my camera-arm.

"No photographs, please!" said a polite but positive voice—and I recalled that photos of Madame Stalin were also forbidden and only on one occasion had a photographer created a scandal by sneaking a shot of her.

I stuck to my allotted post in the tribune a while longer, then turned over to a colleague what films I'd surreptitiously shot over the sea of heads and took the plunge. The police line held fast in front of the press tribune until I yelled for an officer. He finally let me through. I soon lost myself in the army of privileged photographers from the Photo Trust and stood around



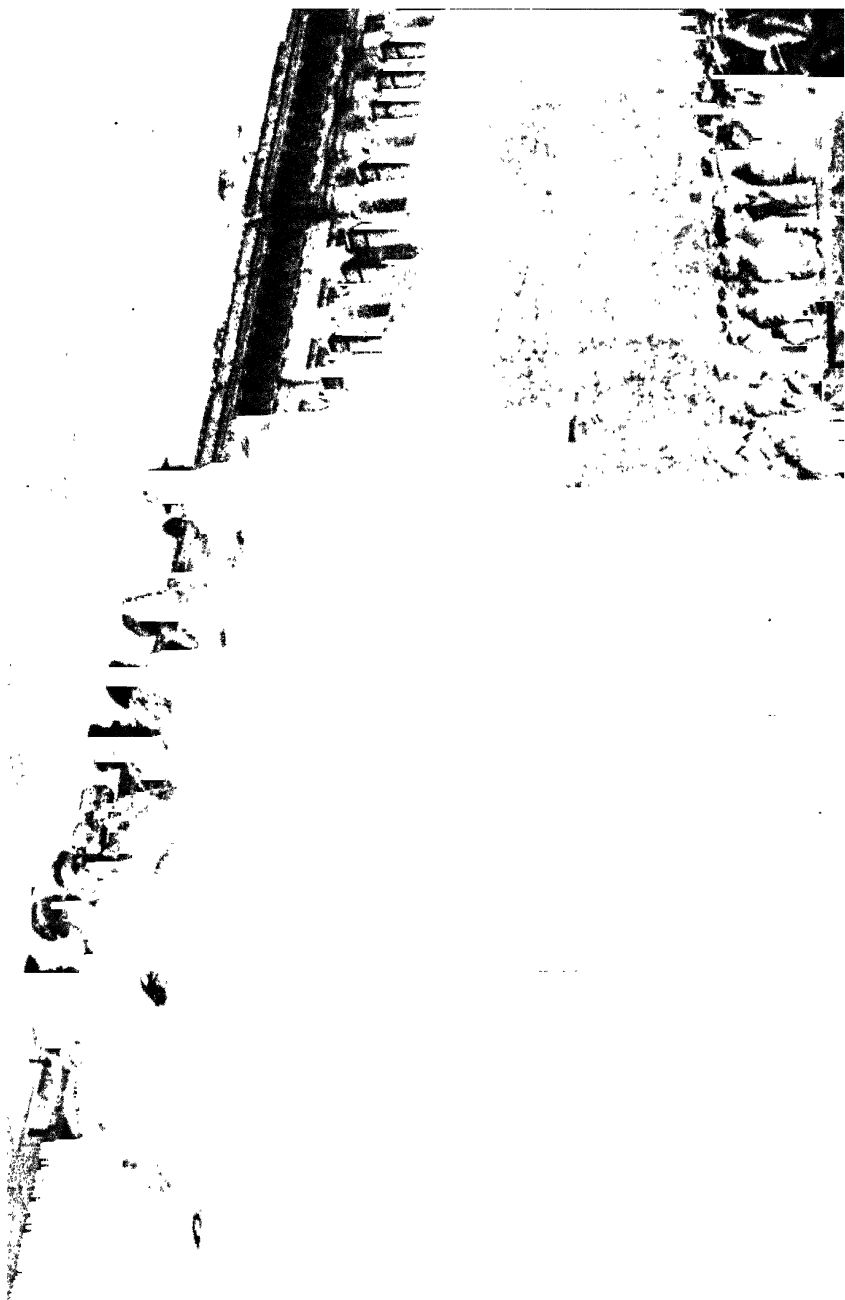
FORBIDDEN. Accidents are taboo. Here is one on Red Square when Horse Artillery, galloping by at breakneck speed, came to grief. The Chinese sign, duplicated in five languages, reads "Long live the Soviet republics."



ШАМЕРЕМ

進令產全  
攻底體也  
萬眾一心  
齊心協力

ФОРМЕРИСТСКОЙ



Twice annually, May 1 and November 7, 7000 Red soldiers lead a procession of more than a million workers in a forced parade. The group atop Lenin's tomb, right to left: Kalinin, Ordjonikidze, Voroshilov, Stalin, Molotov and Gorky.

for a while without shooting, just letting them get accustomed to taking me for granted. Then, pulling my camera from the case slung over my shoulder, I headed straight for Lenin's Tomb and got one shot of my old friend Stalin with Kalinin, Voroshilov, Gorky and the rest of the Bolshevik big shots atop the Tomb, before two GPU men swooped down on me.

I registered surprise, indignation, incredulity, injured feelings, one after the other and every time they said "*Niet!*" I said "Da!" I pretended not to understand a word they said and kept repeating over and over the one word "Photographer." I encouraged louder protests from them by raising my own voice, in the hope that Stalin would look down from his stand and put things right when he saw how his men were insulting me.

Well, anyhow I was one shot to the good. So I moved out of range of the men who had thrown me out and started all over again in a new sector. This time I got in two shots before the police asked for my card, which I showed and which merely brought on the old protest that it did *not* authorize me to photograph, but merely to remain on the last row of the tribune.

Having two shots from this sally I took a new tack, apologized and started for the tribune, stopping just long enough to get in another shot before I was rushed again. This was an easy-going lad who didn't ask for my card but just took me by the arm and led me over to where the photographers were and told me to stay there where I belonged.

I waited until a large body of correspondents left en masse and, mingling unobtrusively with them, got out of the tribune again. Dropping out of their ranks in an

entirely new spot I got in another half-hour's work because the police took it for granted that I was a diplomat whose hobby was photography!

I have been rustled about by the police in many lands but May Day in Moscow set up a new record for the number of call-downs, throw-outs and move-ons in one day. But between encounters I developed a technique whereby I wangled sixty good photos. When I left I noted that the Turks were still standing. When a few days later their official visit came to an end, the press announced that a loan had been granted Turkey. I hope their constituency at home appreciated them.

Chumak, my assistant, met me at the hotel. I had sent him out early in the morning to cover everything outside Red Square. But being a Russian, he was threatened with confiscation of his camera if he so much as pulled it out of the case. He told me that poor old Novitsky, by far the best photographer in Russia, had had his camera confiscated.

Shortly before five o'clock in the afternoon I looked out of my hotel window while Chumak developed my films in the toilet. The proletariat, a hundred abreast and stepping on each others' heels, were still pouring down the hill by the lower Kremlin Wall and past the historic Chinese Wall—which the vandals are pulling down now, after all the centuries—the other side of towering St. Basil's.

At five o'clock the parade of a million and a half Russians was over. As I glanced out the window again I saw that the Kremlin Wall was at last cleared of the marching throngs. Suddenly, at the top of the hill, appeared a drab army of sweeping men and women, tidying-up. Clouds of

dust arose around the Kremlin Tower and the minarets of St. Basil's. Only the double eagles of the Czarist dynasty soared above the dust and activity.

The great eight-hour demonstration had been an impressive one. But I couldn't help thinking how firmly it was backed up by one of the strongest military organizations in the world; and I reflected that the religious demonstration of the previous midnight had occurred without any urging except the inner instincts of undaunted worshipers. I wondered which demonstration *was* the more impressive!

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## CHAPTER VII

### LITVINOV & CO.

**M**AXIM MAXIMOVITCH LITVINOV, Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, was paying one of his infrequent visits to his adopted fatherland, the USSR, and it was up to me to photograph him on his home grounds. Stick-up man de luxe of the Old Régime, diplomatic super-traveling salesman for Bolshevism under the New Régime, *enfant terrible* of Geneva conferences, this keen-witted ex-corset salesman, ex-jailbird, big-shot Soviet official who "never gives interviews"—I quote Padolski—piqued my interest more than anybody connected with "building Socialism."

Sitting in the anteroom of the Press Censorship Bureau waiting for Padolski to tell me once more that "Comrade Litvinov will *not* be photographed," I speculated on the career of this amazing Polish Jew, whose hazardous fate brought him from Siberian exile to his present position as one of Soviet Russia's most important figures:

Sentenced to five years in Siberia but escaped . . . member of a band of highway robbers in the Caucasus which included Joseph Stalin . . . wormed his way out of Czarist Russia after his band had bombed and blown to bits



an imperial convoy and many innocent bystanders . . . grabbed the loot, thousands of roubles, and got to France, where he was arrested while enlisting the money in the cause of Communism . . . successfully resisted extradition on the grounds that his was a "political crime" . . . lived in England under various aliases, as a successful draftsman, banker, foreign language teacher, corset salesman and Communist propagandist . . . accused of being a German spy but beat the rap . . . arrested by the British, who put him in a cell placarded: *Military Guest of His Majesty* . . . held as a hostage for Bruce Lockhart . . . released on exchange . . . married the niece of Sir Sidney Low . . . was indignantly refused by the British as the first Red Ambassador to England. . . .

I naturally prize people who tie tin cans to any established order because nothing in the way of order or disorder should be permitted to become established. So you may imagine my glee when Padolski came out of his office to say that Litvinov had agreed to sit for me.

Now, the Foreign Office in Moscow outwardly and inwardly looks like an old-time cloak and suit set-up in the Thirties and Forties off New York's Seventh Avenue. It designs and executes the shoddy clothing of Bolshevism for sale to the foreign markets. And this Foreign Office is literally foreign, in that there is not one single Russian Slav in a position of authority. From Litvinov down through his staff, all are Jews. And this is no crack at the Jews, either.

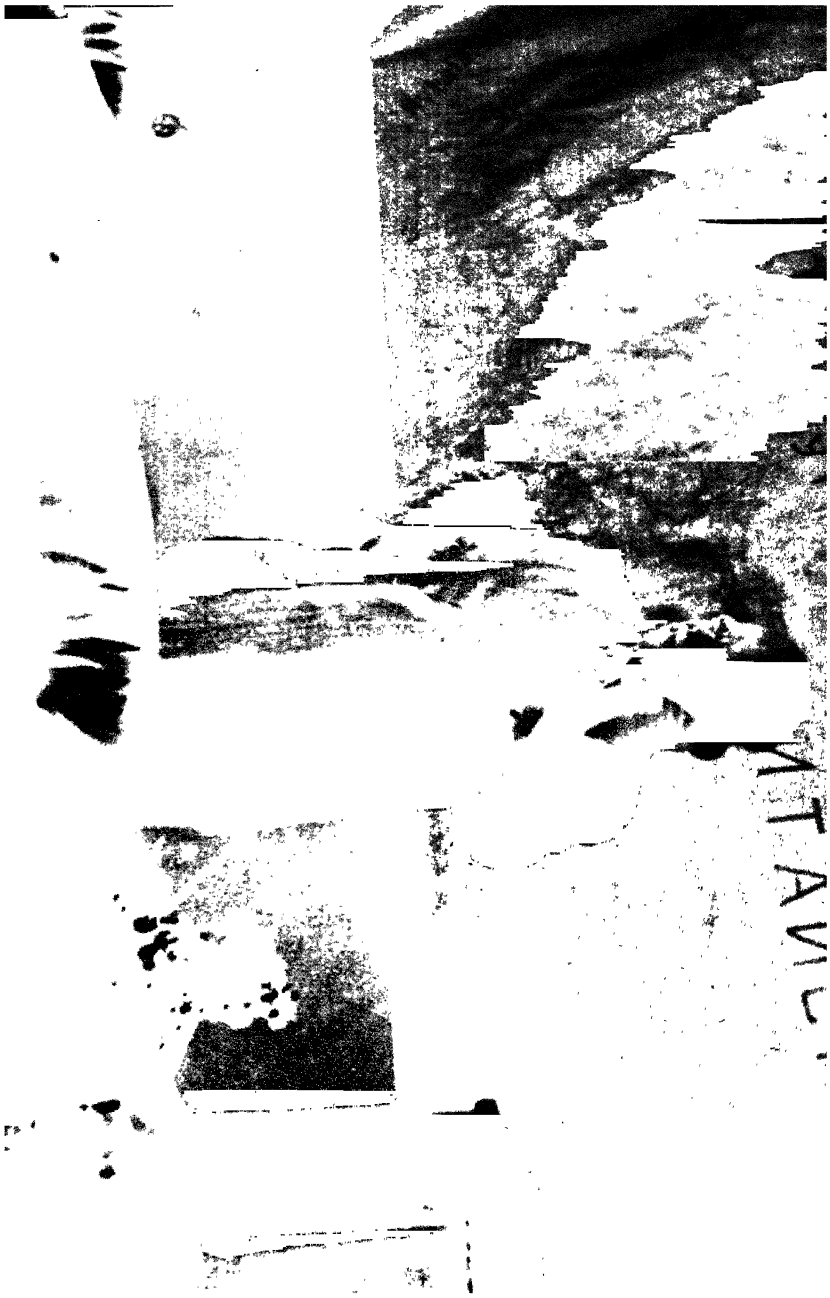
The whole world knows that when you get in an awful jam with the law you either get a Jewish lawyer or wish you had. If you lived in New York or pre-Nazi Berlin and were doubled up with appendicitis, you felt as

though you had a chance if you got a Jewish surgeon. If you want a play produced, you look up a Jewish producer. Or if it's a cinema scenario, you rush to a Jewish outfit. And, speaking for myself, if I crave a really stimulating evening of discussion, conversation, argument, debate, I look up Elmer Rice, Gene Lyons, Konrad Bercovici, Maurice Hindus, to mention only a few of a list of a hundred or so to which I refer when I start getting mentally potty.

To my mind, there's nothing more paradoxical than poor old Slavic Russia having got itself, in one way or another, into such a jam that it had to turn to the Jews it had for centuries periodically and persistently persecuted. I have no doubt that the Russians will some day revert to type and precedent, and ungratefully throw the Jews out of the authoritative positions they occupy throughout the entire Soviet governmental structure. I ran across the symptoms of returning anti-Semitism in many places in Russia; I even heard the pupil of a Bolshevik school, who had never known any other system, froth at the mouth with anti-Semitism. But seventy-five per cent of the men who made the Russian Revolution were Jews; Jewish minds do the quick thinking in Soviet Russia today and in the Communist Party the world over—and *Litvinov & Co.*, Great Lubyanka Street, Moscow, is the main office of a system of political chain stores which girdle the globe.

All Foreign Offices, in every country, have an air of secrecy. Probably the Soviet Foreign Office has no more to keep under cover than our own State Department, but, considering its present use, the building which houses *Litvinov & Co.* is almost comic. The dealings

Litvinov, stick-up man deluxe of the Old Régime, diplomatic super-salesman of Bolshevism under the new, *enfant terrible* of Geneva conferences, ex-corset salesman, ex-jailbird, the bigshot Soviet official "never gives interviews." His huge map of the world forms the background.



MTAVIC



FORBIDDEN. A harsh GPU official allowed a photographer to immortalize his hostages to fortune in Red Square . . . One hostage, I may add, frequently exploited a comrade on his capitalist father's credit.

with Sovietism of five-sixths of the world's surface come to a relatively ramshackle, six-story building, located on a corner—and the rubbernecking visitor to Moscow is immediately told that of course the Foreign Office will someday be housed in the proposed \$100,000,000 Soviet Palace—if that so-far phantom edifice ever gets beyond the blueprint stage. For the present, the Foreign Office Building is not listed with institutions proudly pointed out by Intourist's cautious stooges.

Shabby or no, the Soviet Foreign Office represents the connecting link between Communism and Capitalism, between the Proletarian and Bourgeois worlds; its sharp-witted personnel is dedicated to converting a hostile and suspicious world to the Red viewpoint some time in the future. At present, the realistic employees of *Litvinov & Co.* concentrate on laying stable foundations politically and economically for future conversion to Communism, by first wangling from foreign nations all possible concessions toward building up Soviet Russia, and, second, selling the outside world the idea that Soviet Russia is already built up.

Camera slung over my shoulder, I entered the portals of this anything but philanthropic institution.

A Foreign Office scrubwoman, a white handkerchief wound about her head, stopped her dusting to guide me to the private office of Foreign Commissar Litvinov. My credentials had already been okayed by a GPU guard.

I followed my unorthodox guide through an anteroom which was furnished like the tourist hotels, gilt and brocade period furniture probably taken from a former Czarist palace. The scrubwoman knocked confidently on a door, a secretary responded. I was led in without

further ado, my appointment having been arranged beforehand. In sharp contrast to the preceding elegance, the Commissar's office was like that of an American business man: a long oak table, chairs and a wall map were the main articles of furniture. Through the windows I got my first glimpse over the walls of the old GPU building, a sinister structure which seemed to cast an aura of sudden death.

The super traveling salesman of Bolshevism settled himself with his back to a huge map of the Soviet Republics and adjoining countries. There were Poland, Afghanistan, Persia, India, Tibet and China. Japan was not included—but her gigantic shadow, Manchuria, made her absence boldly conspicuous. The whole effect was that of an international chessboard with Litvinov in the rôle of Alekhine, the chess champion, playing thirty opponents simultaneously.

Litvinov was fully as impressive as the map. One of the most impressive men I have ever photographed.

His head is massive. His mobile face seems chiseled in granite. A face that would confound a sculptor: all convex lines and planes. He has the high forehead of the constructive thinker. Built like a Japanese wrestler, barrel-chested. Wrists that would be difficult to pinion. A good-natured nose, big ears lying close to a fighting head. A short neck, if any. Altogether, a picture of a man unflinching in purpose, unyielding yet quick at advantageous compromise. A man who is ruthless on the offense, adamant on the defense, offering no vulnerable opening to an adversary.

I set up my camera. Before I could shoot, a secretary entered, handed his chief a bunch of typewritten sheets:



"*Pajolsta, Tovarisch Commissar,*" he said simply. "Please, Comrade Commissar."

"*Sposiba,*" Litvinov acknowledged: the secretary vanished. I was afforded an example of the speed and despatch with which this shrewd diplomat makes moves. Oblivious to me, to the clatter and toot of Moscow's tangled traffic from the street below, the Commissar concentrated chess fashion on whatever problem the document presented. He did not seem to know that I had already shot a picture of him; his keen eyes were boring into the document, his coldly methodical mind filing away meticulous notes, oblivious to all else.

I glanced at the map again and wondered where he would make a move after absorbing the despatch in his hand. I thought of the paradox of this Red civilization, which could bring a man with his past career—a destroyer of the most ruthless type—to his present all-important position as the marrow between the grating bones of Communism and Capitalism. As I looked round my camera at this extremely high official of a great and stable world power, I wondered how his violent past could be reconciled with his present status as the world's smoothest and most successful diplomat. He had been brought up in a hard-boiled, realistic school; perhaps this very element of realism, of refusing to weaken himself by knuckling to tradition, had given him an advantage over the spoon-fed type of rival.

Suddenly Litvinov's secretary reappeared, as if he knew from experience how long it would take his chief to digest the report. Litvinov handed him the papers with ten seconds' worth of rapid-fire verbal instructions, and that was that—whatever it was.

I rather expected he would rise and stick a Red glass tack somewhere in the map; but he didn't. He eyed me sharply; I got the uneasy feeling that he saw through my disguise as a photographer, anticipated I would try to interview him.

Characteristically he took the offensive, he interviewed me!

"Were you at Geneva?"

"No, sir."

He had just returned from Geneva—and he seemed surprised. Evidently he had the impression that all the photographers in the world had been at the conference.

I tried a question.

"It must be difficult to get back to work after your holiday at Geneva."

This got me a hurt look from over the top of his octagonal glasses.

"Not much of a holiday," he said reprovingly.

"The conference is all finished now?" I queried.

"It has been finished since a long time," he said with a smile. "But it will go on indefinitely."

"Anybody left there?"

"Henderson, the secretaries and the press," he said—as if the joke were on Mr. Henderson and the press.

I snapped him in several poses. The telephone jangled. Litvinov walked with springy step to the opposite end of the room, and took up the receiver: the conversation lasted about five minutes. Some report he was getting seemed to amuse him; I followed him and shot a smokeless noiseless flash while he carried on. Had it been a smoky noisy flash, I doubt if it would have diverted Litvinov from his conversation; he can shift from one

thing to another as quickly as a fencer but apparently concentrates on one thing at a time.

One advantage in working with Litvinov is that he can speak about any language one may offer. I asked him how many he spoke; he mentioned five, though denying that he spoke them well. His English was East Side London with a heavy Jewish accent. Whatever his accent he can probably think in languages he can't even speak.

Well, I had the shots I wanted and I had him on his home grounds: the man one always thinks of as being abroad. So I risked a question on Russia's attitude toward the USA.

"Our attitude has never changed."

"Then," I asked, "how do you consider the chance for recognition?"

"Oh, I suppose it will come sooner or later," he replied, with the air of a chess player when it's the other fellow's move.

Noting from his expression that I was getting into deep water, I shifted the subject and asked him:

"How do you like the horse races in Moscow?"

"What! Horse races in Moscow!"

For a moment I thought he was being facetious; then I realized that the man who knows world policies and diplomacy inside out actually had never seen or heard of one of the few gay sporting and social events of Moscow!

"I suppose you are going to tell me there's betting on the races!" he said.

"Yes, sir, there certainly is: betting regulated by the government; the *pari mutuel*!"

Then he *was* astonished. So I told him why such a

thing was sanctioned by a government that was too serious-minded to indulge in the frivolous sidelines found on the Continent. I think I successfully defended the purposes of the racing and the Horse Trust which controls it on the basis that it was for the training of blooded horses for breeding purposes.

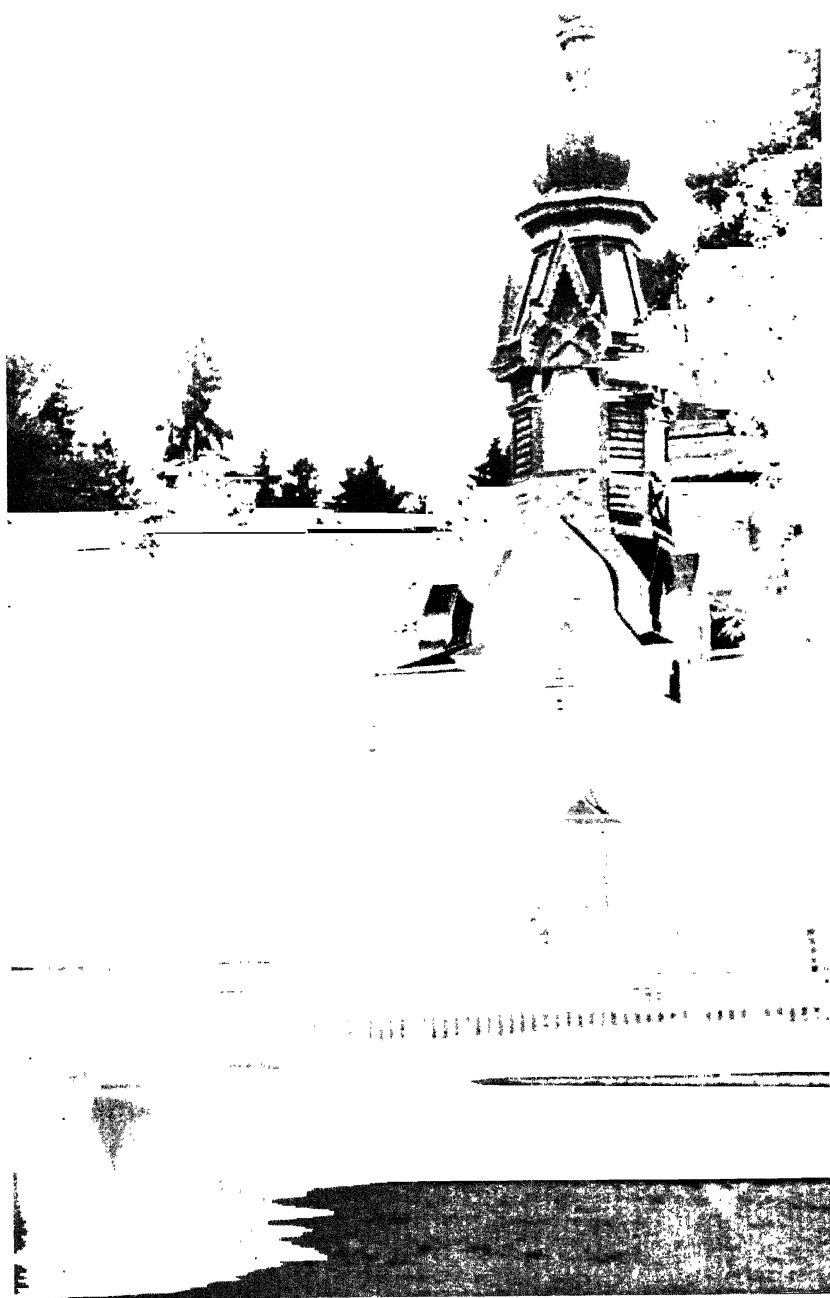
I rushed straight out of Litvinov's office into the Press Censorship Department to tell dear old Padolski about my interview and to thank him for wangling it for me.

Although there are strictly enforced rules against tourists entering the Foreign Office building, a journalist can get in if his credentials indicate sufficient importance to warrant his reception by a State Department official. But even then, unless you're known, it takes a little wangling.

The Soviet Press Censorship Bureau is the filter through which trickles the small stream of approved newspaper information on Red Russia; it is therefore responsible for the coloring and deleting and diluting of information on the dictatorship of the proletariat which reaches you, the reader of this book, and all newspaper readers in all countries outside of Russia. Here the five keen-witted censors sit poker-faced and efficiently stack the cards in favor of the Soviet Union, so that those dealt you in the daily press are the hearts and diamonds of the all-red deck, never the spades or clubs. All correspondents reporting under the Red dictatorship must submit their cables to one or the other of these five men, whose sole duty is to see that nothing "injurious" to Russia remains in that cable.

The correspondent or roving journalist presents himself in an anteroom on the fifth floor. There a young

The church in our village of Cliasma, a typical Russian temple. In the cities the few bells that have not been melted may not ring, but in the provinces sixty percent of the churches are still functioning.





A suburban newspaper stand where it is extremely improbable that you will find the *New York Times*, *Fortune*, or *Harper's Bazaar*—and strawberries for sale or at all events for yearning contemplation.



lady who speaks several languages takes up his case and motions him a seat, where he may read such papers from home as are not on the Soviet blacklist. An important person this attractive, well-dressed young woman, for she is in charge of the invitations to official functions and banquets; it is wise, therefore, to pay attention to her as she pieces together a language all her own out of the seven tongues she speaks somewhat brokenly.

Resident correspondents come breezing into her office, greet each other, each wondering if his opposition is there on the same story. Finally he gets in to see one of the censors; if a newcomer, one of the five issues him a little booklet into which the journalist's photograph is pasted. The booklet states that he is a recognized news-gatherer from abroad, and as such is entitled to all the privileges of Moscow's privileged class.

Immediately upon receipt of the booklet, the correspondent starts a duel with the censors, trying to wangle stuff past them which will sound pretty good when set up in type back home, with the censors playing the counter-game of whittling down the cables and soothing the irate correspondent simultaneously. The best at this little battle of wits is Padolski. The correspondent may slip one by one of the other censors occasionally but rarely do they manage to outmaneuver astute Comrade Padolski.

Padolski is the key man in this key division of this key governmental department; despite the fact that he refused appointment as Chief Censor because he doesn't go in for titles. Padolski may have a first name, but it is doubtful if anyone in Russia, including his wife, knows it. He is just Padolski to the hard-boiled correspondents,

who respect him as they respect few other Soviet officials. He knows American slang from A to Z, with all the latest wrinkles, and knows British slang almost as well, so the American correspondent who tries to get adverse reports on Russia out over the wires by disguising his real meaning in slang phrases might just as well save his time and ingenuity. Padolski knows all the answers, and can kill, delete or regretfully return a cable which he might consider detrimental to the Soviet State with such suave and unbending courtesy that the pleasantness of the experience might almost, but not quite, overbalance the chagrin of being defeated at the foils.

Padolski looks for all the world like a keen-brained capitalistic surgeon or professor; yet his principles, from which he never once deviates, make him the personification of the ideal upon which Communism was designed. If all Communists were like him I would vote for the Great Experiment without hesitation. He is one of the few real Communists I met in Russia.

Most of the other men in his department are foxes.

Padolski revels in American humor as well as slang, loves a good story and has collected verbal yarns about the late President Coolidge, whom he considered the most entertaining character we ever had in America. He was so taken with a story I relayed him from Will Rogers that he told it all through the Foreign Office and, as he confided in me later:

"Your Coolidge story went all through the Kremlin and even to Comrade Stalin himself."

The story which so took his fancy was how Coolidge, when asked by Rogers how he kept his health when

the job of President caused the collapse of many former Chief Executives, replied in his nasal tone :

“Wa-a-al, I don’t get mixed up with the big problems!”

Padolski has never been in America and I, for one, would give my shirt to see him made Ambassador to the USA; if anyone could tackle that delicate job as well as Padolski I’ve yet to hear of him. I had many impromptu glasses of tea and even a dinner at his home, a very modest dwelling on the ground floor of what had been the poorer section of Moscow—it’s mostly all poor now. No swanking around in bourgeois apartments for Comrade Padolski, no huge penthouse overlooking the Moscow River such as that horny-handed old proletarian, Karl Radek, enjoys. And Padolski’s wife and children would be an excellent rebuttal of the idea that family life no longer exists in Russia. The children are as well-mannered as any I’ve seen in any land and only in the library was there any sign of luxury, a word which, to Padolski’s mind, means books. Whether or not they came from collections in former palaces I never asked, but certainly they were chosen mainly from the classics, and in many languages.

There’s always an eager and loudly protesting group of foreign correspondents milling about the Press Censorship anteroom when there is going to be a big free banquet or a celebration in Red Square or in the National Opera House. Many a visiting journalist has left Russia to bend his copy to conform to his chagrin at the “indignity” of having been refused a Red Square ticket; on the other hand, many of them have written glowing accounts of “building Socialism” because their peacockish vanity has been salved with free tickets. It is the

ticklish job of the five press censors to see that the percentage of the former is as small as possible and the percentage of the latter increased when possible.

So far as I know, my colleague, Margaret Bourke-White, and I are the only American photographers who have covered Russia, accredited by the Foreign Office. It was the consensus of opinion that if our photographic phalanx of two were ever to be increased a separate department would have to be created.

It is no easy matter wading through the Red tape that hinders the photographer from getting permission to ply his trade in Russia. Even the free-lance analyzer had better lock up his notes in a portable steel safe if he doesn't want his secretary, his interpreter, his house-keeper—one of which at least is a GPU—to sneak a few looks at what he has to say about the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But for those of us camera reporters who verify their figures with documentary evidence, when they can get away with it, it's a different thing altogether. I spent at least ninety-nine per cent of my working hours in Russia over at the Foreign Office, wangling the necessary permission and facilities to photograph this, that and the other thing—and the other one per cent in actually taking pictures.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### *FAREWELL TO CAPITALISM*

AFTER thirty-five years of being exploited by hard-hearted Capitalists I rushed to the Moscow Telegraph Office to file a telegram announcing my farewell to Capitalism! I had burned the bridges over which I had marched into Socialism, been converted, seen the light, thrown in my lot with the boys and girls who were "building Socialism," and from then on, secretly thanking the God I was "repudiating," I would be "going straight."

No more waiting on the capitalistic *New York Times* for much needed films or more needed money; no overdrawing my account with the equally substantial *Ullsteinhaus*; no pulling the doorbells of editors in England and France and asking for a chance to work my head off for a pittance. The images of all the hydra-headed Capitalist friends and backers, employers and colleagues, leered at me in my state of exultation; and I leered right back, conscious of the support of my Communist friends of the Soviet Photo Trust, known as *Soyuzphoto*.

Apparently the Trust had been raising a howl because

I scooped them on Stalin, on the May Day celebration and a few other things. The Foreign Office backed my contention that my impartial photographic reporting would get published abroad while their propaganda would not. But, as I explained when I wrote to my family to Berlin to join me:

*"Big business in Russia carries as much weight as it does in any other country. Anyhow, they wangled me into a position where I had to choose between washing-up here and signing-up with the Bolos.*

*"I signed. Heaven knows what it will lead to; but at least the Berlin representative of Photo Trust will pick up the auto, the children and you, and ship you F.O.B. Moscow. And quite soon. Soyuzphoto is making a contract which they say will be ready in a couple of days."*

The Photo Trust offices are at Nikolskaya 4, Moscow, an old pre-revolutionary business block on a street connecting with the Red Square. There are two floors devoted to the *Soyuzphoto* offices, with a string of miniature dark-rooms fronting on the courtyard. On the ground floor they have a laboratory. These simple quarters house an organization which, through agencies in the principal capitals of the world, markets photographs of the sunny side of "building Socialism." If, for instance, some capitalistic publication would like a photo showing starving peasants in the Ukraine, it has only to communicate with the nearest *Soyuzphoto* agency and without delay they will be supplied with a beautiful shot of a happy workman holding a hammer in mid-air.

On my way to the Photo Trust headquarters I walked along streets hectic with traffic, pedestrians so numerous that they overflowed into the streets. Everybody seemed

On their day off every week Muscovites throng to the athletic grounds for Field Day sports. Strength, skill, speed and endurance are enthusiastically applauded in a country striving for maximum physical development.





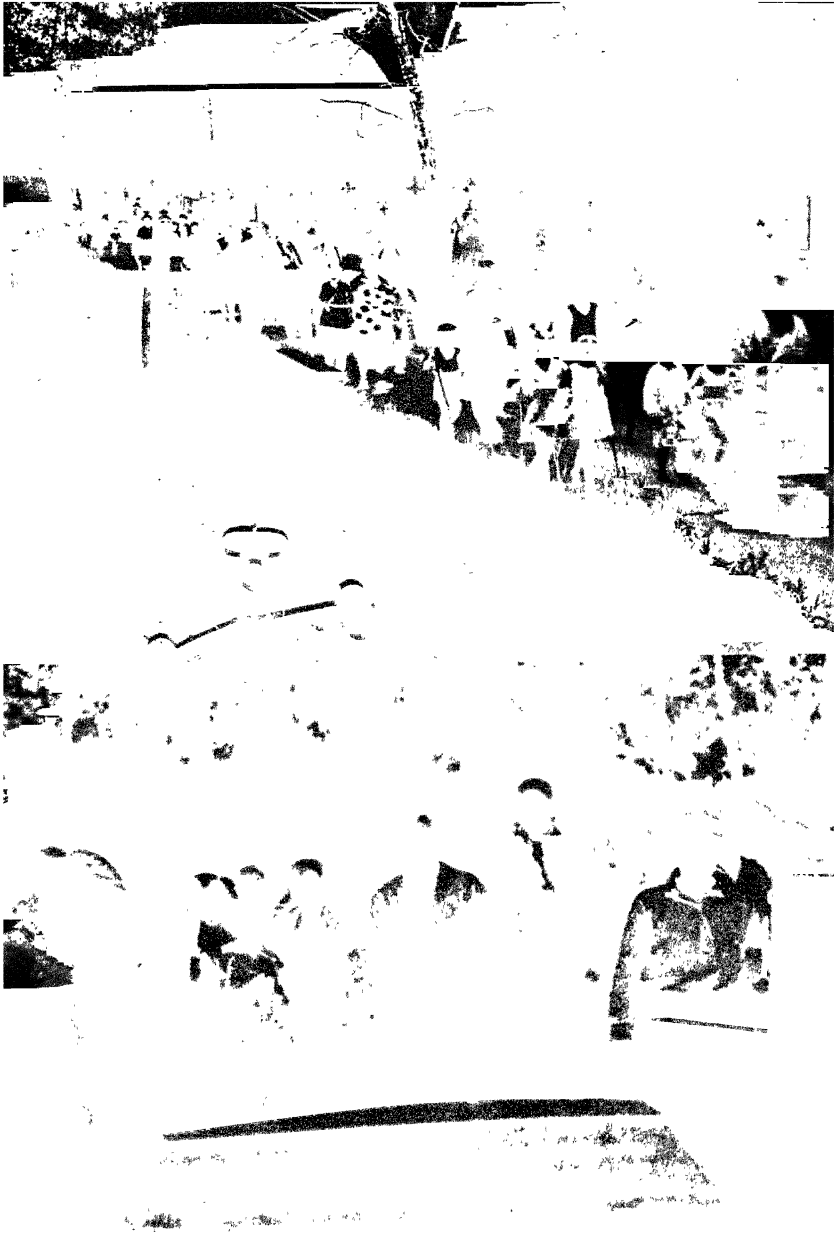


Figure 1. A large crowd of people gathered outdoors, possibly for a protest or public event. The image is heavily stylized with high contrast, making details difficult to discern. A person in the foreground is wearing a headband and a light-colored shirt. The background shows a dense group of people and some structures.

Religious funerals are prohibited on the streets but tolerated in cemeteries where 100% Bolsheviks never go. In remote regions, beyond the reach of propaganda, peasants mourn their dead at rest in paper-covered coffins.

preoccupied with business affairs. It was warm and the men for the most part wore clean, ironed, snow-white Russian blouses. The girls and women looked attractive in short skirts, and reflected the growing tendency to keep slicked-up which had been lacking five years before. Few men or women wore hats, about half of them carried portfolios. Taken as a whole, they represented a scene not different, except in details, from noon hour in the business district of almost any teeming capitalistic city. Nobody appeared unemployed or worried for fear of losing a job.

The super-swift Moscow trams rattled joyfully along the tracks, their motormen so carried away with the exuberance of the scene that they momentarily forgot to run down a few of the track-crossing pedestrians. These trams are not unlike the American streetcars, except that they run in sections of three. One must enter at the rear and leave at the front, which is an inviolable rule. Moscow trams are packed and jammed beyond anything the New York City subways ever dreamed of. They have innovations I have never seen anywhere else: the system of deciding whether a child is old enough to pay fare, for instance, and the method of paying the fare. There is a little mark on the door-jamb at the front of the car; if the child is taller than that mark, he pays, if under, he doesn't, regardless of age. Dwarfs ride free. The great pastime is for those at the front of the car to pass their money back from hand to hand, over the heads and shoulders of the mob to the conductor, usually a woman, who sends the ticket back. You spend about half your time on the tram passing fares, and every time you say "*Pajolsta.*"

The Photo Trust building had originally three stories; but, due to "building Socialism" on top of Moscow, two more stories were being added. I don't remember seeing any building in Moscow where the superimposed stories had actually been completed. The scaffolding always grew old and rusty with age, the workmen were still there hammering and talking away, but there was always something in the way of materials lacking to keep them from actually being completed. In many instances I have seen these superimposed stories occupied by families and offices, but the scaffolding outside remained. On the other side of the courtyard back of *Soyuzphoto* was some sort of a technical school where classes were in session all day, and more classes at night. Adjoining it was a workshop that looked identically like the type which Reds in America put on posters showing the terrible sweatshop conditions in the cloak and suit business where the proletariat is exploited by fat cigar-chewing capitalists. In this workshop girls were making paper lampshades and paper table decorations. I never saw paper lampshades or paper table decorations on lamps or tables in Russia, but it's a big country and this may have been the only such factory in the Soviet Union. There were living quarters on the other sides of the courtyard and the children all played outside the Photo Trust windows, adding considerably to the already considerable din, but getting on nobody's nerves.

Into the building I hustled, elbowed my way through the corridor on the ground floor. Clerks, mostly girls, were all over the place. Each one with a batch of prints in her hand or documents of some sort. About one out of every three smoking a cigarette. There was one little

office after another, each crowded to overflowing. Some sorting out photos, others typing and still more hunting for mislaid somethings. Carpenters and plasterers were adding to the confusion by making some changes in the place, all over the place. Somebody hung over each telephone chattering or smoking while somebody else waited to get on. I inquired of one of the waiting girls for the director of the foreign department and she waved me around the dim winding corridor.

I found the door but didn't need to knock. The door was open and people were coming and going. More photographers waiting around. Three girls typing for one man before a huge stack of American and English newspapers which he was going through. All in a room about twelve feet square. The talk was in Russian, German and English. Another door was open into the director's office. I couldn't see him for a photographer, a girl clerk, a carpenter and much smoke in the room about six by nine. Through the window, in an alley, I could see a few workmen shifting ladders about and having much to say about it. The telephone rang often and each time a typist would tell them to call another number. I gave my name to a girl on the way into the director's office, who passed the word back to me to come in.

Rohr, the director, is an Austrian Jew with a drooping mustache. He roused another photographer from the lone chair in the corner, asked me to sit down, offered me a cigarette, continued to dispose of the matters which were being brought him by the others and occasionally interrupted his work by addressing some words to me. He kept taking letters and photos from the clerks, look-

ing them over and putting them under the blotting pad on his desk, which was beginning to look like Vesuvius about to erupt. Cordial, almost unctuous, Rohr shot flattering and reassuring remarks at me over, through and around the rapidly growing stacks of papers on his desk and the incoming and outgoing flunkies.

Literally, I did not sign a contract with *Soyuzphoto*. But the head of the trust, with whom I had also discussed things, assured me it was the same thing. What I did sign was a contract with the *Unionbild* of Berlin, which was ostensibly an incorporated German firm, but actually, as I learned later, a Soviet propaganda bureau for the distribution of Soviet photos in Germany.

The manager of this German firm was in Moscow at the time, and he and Rohr and I reached our "gentlemen's agreement" as we sat around our coffee in the restaurant of the New Moscow Hotel. They both made me feel so much like one of them, a convert to a common cause, that when Rohr said the actual contract with the Photo Trust would take a few days to be drawn up, and inasmuch as we were in accord with the terms it was just a formality, I signed the German contract. And my German comrade left the next day for Berlin, promising to pack up the auto, my family and our impedimenta and ship them to Moscow.

"So you're going to work for the Photo Trust," said a cynical correspondent friend. "Well, I suppose I can't stop you now. But for God's sake, when you're out on a job, *don't* tell anyone you're working for *Soyuzphoto*!"

When I asked him why not, he said:

"It would be bad for your prestige."

However, I felt better when my friends at the Foreign Office, led by Padolski, welcomed me into the Bolshevik fold with genuine enthusiasm.

"You had better show me your contract," said Padolski, when we settled down in his office as we had on so many occasions.

"I haven't signed it yet with *Soyuzphoto*," I replied, "only with the German firm."

"I'm afraid you will never make a business man, Abbe," he said in a fatherly tone.

"Do I have to be a business man in Soviet Russia, too?" I countered.

"The *Soyuzphoto* is a business organization," he continued, "and business is a business in this country just as it is in yours."

I was a bit taken aback, but figured to myself that I had taken longer chances than this before and, besides, no matter how the engagement turned out financially, I would have learned what it felt like to be one of a group engaged in "building Socialism."

"And," repeated Padolski earnestly, "I would advise you *not* to bring in your family until you have signed the Russian contract."

I didn't tell him that I had already telegraphed for the family, as I always act on my hunches rather than on calm consideration of what will happen tomorrow. Nor did I take his admonitions too seriously, at least not while he was pounding them into my head.

But when I got home that night I found that what he had said had stayed with me. Padolski, as a key official of the Soviet Government, ought to know what he was

talking about. What if, after all, he turned out to be right? What if business *was* business in the Soviet Union? What if *Soyuzphoto* might be planning to double cross me on my as yet unsigned contract?

These thoughts kept growing in my mind until finally, three days before my family was supposed to start, I went to Rohr and the director to deliver an ultimatum:

I would expect \$150 a month in *valuta*, payable in Moscow as a drawing account against my fifty per cent royalties which they had already agreed to give me on all photographs published abroad.

"But," said Rohr, "we have agreed to pay you in roubles against your *valuta* royalties."

"All right," I said, "I'll accept roubles at the rate of twenty for a dollar—although that's a concession as I can get them twenty-five for a dollar."

This sent cold shivers up and down their spines.

"We know of no way in which you can buy roubles other than at the official rate of two for a dollar," piped up Rohr, trying hard not to look like one who knew the facts of life in Russia. Both men rolled their eyes to the ceiling and back over their shoulders, perhaps to see if the head of the GPU was peering through the solid brick wall.

"All right," I said, waiving the question, "just pay me the *valuta*, and let nature take its course."

Rohr promised to talk to Stammberger of *Unionbild* by phone to Berlin that very night; and next morning he told me that he had talked with Stammberger, who had agreed "in principle."

"What does that mean?" I surprised myself by saying.



FORBIDDEN. Electric railway in the country, about as important strategically as your suburban trolley. But a rule is a rule; "Thou shalt not photograph" figures prominently in the Soviet decalogue and stations are forbidden ground.





On the façade of the Metropole Hotel: the Church stands guard over treasure filched from the exploited masses. Children spreading sweetness and light: reading from left to right, a Russian priest, his swinish colleague.

A few days before I would have trustfully taken his reply as an answer.

"Oh," he replied, dismissing my suspicions with a wave of his hand, "it's all settled. Just a matter of how, when and where you will be paid, if in roubles."

"Comrade Rohr is the biggest liar in the USSR," said my Comrade Assistant.

(And the USSR has 160,000,000 inhabitants!)

On the other hand, I'd been warned that my assistant himself was "an unscrupulous liar who gets by with it because he has a brother who is an important man in the Party."

A member of an embassy staff had also told me that the entire Press Censorship staff of the Foreign Office had been selected by Comrade Litvinov from the most skillful liars in the government service.

Of course, the embassy man was a diplomat and diplomats must serve their country first, and truth next—or later.

As for myself, and how I fit into this picture, the reader must judge. All I can say is that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, from all I observed of it, is no place for a George Washington.

I *can* vouch for Comrade Rohr. I didn't analyze enough of the Soviet Union's 160,000,000 inhabitants to verify my assistant's rating of Rohr as the Chief Liar. But I bet on Rohr and back him against, say, any ten liars Intourist might want to enter in the field.

Two days before I had signed the German contract with *Unionbild*, Rohr had told me that my contract with *Soyuzphoto* had been drawn up, and merely awaited the

signature of the Comrade Director to be submitted to me to sign.

A week later the Comrade Director told me that they had been too busy at headquarters, that the contract had not yet been drawn up, but that I need not worry because everything was "*in ordnung*."

"And anyhow," he said reprovingly, "we have promised to take care of you and your family, so why all the worry?"

Just the same, I was worried and uneasy and apprehensive in the bargain. True, the Bolos had fulfilled one of their promises—they had brought my family to Moscow. But that wouldn't help much if they let us down on the rest of the bargain.

Besides, they had not yet given me any work to do. I had already been three weeks in my *datcha*, or summer cottage in the country, making occasional trips to Moscow to find out when the shooting began and trying to extract cash out of *Soyuzphoto* to keep my family going. Now I was getting deeper and deeper into debt, supported by my friends, the press correspondents. One day, when I was more broke than usual, I took a train to Moscow and called on my old friend Padolski.

Padolski leaned back in his swivel-chair and looked out over the Moscow rooftops while I recounted my present predicament. I could almost see the cogs in his head shifting to another gear. He rose abruptly and left me sitting in his office with the remark:

"Look over some of the capitalistic papers on my desk and try to figure out why you don't possess any more of the capital. I'll be back in a minute."

As a matter of fact it was twenty minutes before he

came in and handed me 1,500 roubles in five-rouble notes. I nearly fell out of the window.

"You can pay me back when you're on your feet," he said.

Now fifteen hundred roubles to Padolski meant about three months' salary; to me, knowing where roubles could be bootlegged, it came to exactly sixty dollars. But roubles which are artificially maintained at a value of two for a dollar are not cheap when you haven't got the dollar.

I offered Padolski a receipt but he waved it aside.

"Just remember that I have no way of getting roubles except by earning them," he said significantly. "Those roubles mean something to me."

Interpreted literally, that remark meant that Padolski was a sincere Communist whose scruples would not allow him to bootleg his country's currency.

As I went out the door I reflected on the difference between dealing with Padolski, who had no small-time axes to grind or petty grudges to work out, and suffering the foxy tactics of Rohr and the rest of the *Soyuzphoto* nonentities. Had it been necessary that day to choose between signing up with a Chicago gang and a Soviet trust, I'd have taken the former.

As time went on Padolski's non-bootlegged roubles were fast running out and still *Soyuzphoto* had no work for me, and no money. I was beginning to preface every conversation with them, with the remark that I was still broke. Six weeks after I started my workless working days I put the statement bluntly to Rohr:

"I haven't been paid for six weeks!"

Comrade Rohr made a deprecating gesture.

"No one in *Soyuzphoto* has been paid for six weeks," he said calmly. "So why should *you* worry?"

I wasn't too flabbergasted to gasp:

"I don't see how I can live on what the *Soyuzphoto* employees *aren't* being paid!"

Rohr evaded the issue, painting an elaborate oil painting of hundreds of loyal Photo Trust employees, including himself, struggling manfully on without pay for the sake of The Cause.

A few weeks previous I might possibly have fallen for this myself. But by this time I had had enough of starving for *Soyuzphoto*, and living on glowing promises and borrowed roubles. Rohr's pathetic picture—which I learned later wasn't so pathetic after all, as he was living on *valuta* earned by his wife as a correspondent for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*—failed to move me to tears. I saved them for my own family who had been brought into Russia on his gilt-edged promises.

However, it might be diplomatic to look sympathetic for the poor unpaid *Soyuzphoto* toilers, so I did my best; then put up to Rohr the question:

"When do I start working for you?"

Rohr seemed relieved at the change of subject. He assured me that *Soyuzphoto* was wading through the tangled morass of Soviet bureaucracy, to get permission for me to start taking pictures for them—although of course he did not put it just that way.

I kept at Rohr for days on the theory that if I hammered away from all sides I might get something accomplished. I would no sooner ask that the door be closed



than somebody would come bursting in and insist upon being heard about something urgent. Our conversation would go about as follows:

*Abbe*: When are my films coming?

*Rohr*: I will talk tonight with Berlin and find (turning to somebody's head in the doorway) you promised to have those prints in here yesterday and now you say it's tomorrow. Which is it?

*Abbe*: What about the films?

*Clerk at the other desk*: Someone at the phone wants to talk with you.

*Rohr*: Tell them I'm occupied.

*Clerk*: Tovarisch is occupied.

*Rohr*: I will tonight talk with Berlin on the phone.

*Abbe*: But you said that before. Yesterday you were talking on the phone.

*Clerk on phone*: It is Tovarisch Rohr, your wife wants to speak to you.

*Rohr*: *Ach du lieber Gott!*

Rohr goes to telephone and I amuse myself by looking over his desk. Rohr apparently keeps all of his correspondence tucked under his blotter pad which gives it a humpy and uneven appearance. (It was during one of Rohr's conversations on the telephone that I discovered two telegrams I had turned over to him a week previously to be sent immediately to Berlin about my films.)

As Rohr talks on the telephone another Comrade comes in and stands waiting. A file clerk comes in with a big stack of photographs and puts them on top of Rohr's blotter pad, thereby screening my eyes from further observation.

Rohr returns to his desk and asks me for a cigarette

and I turn to the clerk and ask him for a cigarette. Nobody has a cigarette. Rohr then gets up and screams out into the other office:

"Has anybody got a cigarette?" And somebody provides one for all of us.

*Rohr*: Comrade Abbe, can you possibly come back tomorrow? You see how busy I am.

*Abbe*: Comrade Rohr, you are always busy. You are building Socialism. You must be busy. We must all be busy. If I had my films I would be busy.

*Rohr*: You will always have your little joke. Please, Comrade Abbe, tomorrow morning, yes?

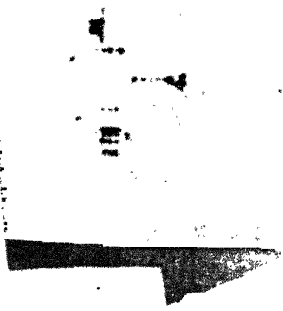
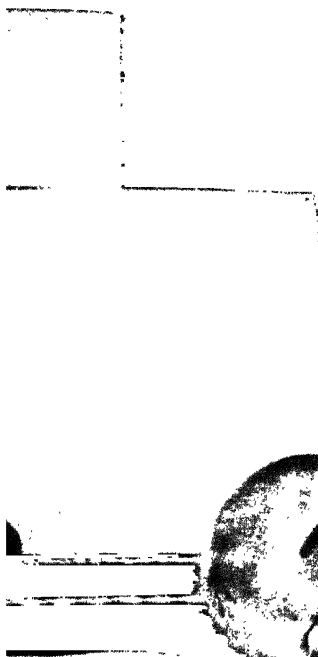
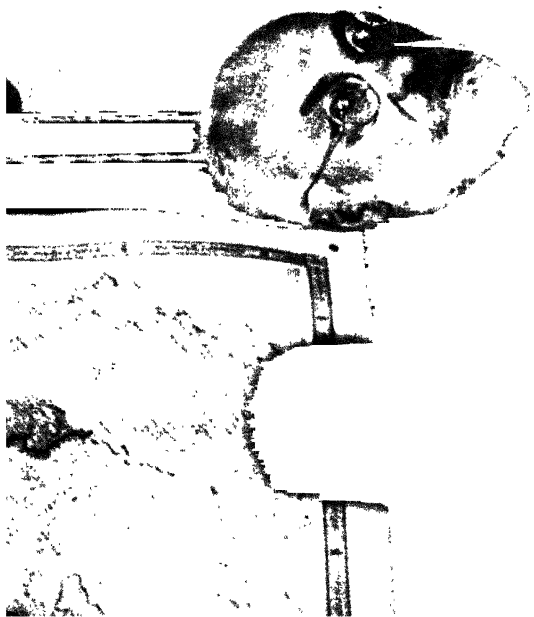
While all these negotiations were going on, I had a good chance to look over the *Soyuzphoto* headquarters and see what sort of an outfit I was due to work for, when, as and if I ever did start working for them.

*Soyuzphoto* has, all over the Soviet Union, a staff of five hundred still-photographers. This trust for still-photos has no connection whatever with *Sovkino*, which is a monopoly of all motion picture activity in Russia. The newsreel men are in a different category from the *Soyuzphoto* boys. Moscow had thirty-odd still-photographers who would average up for ability as high as any groups I have worked with in London, Berlin, Paris, Rome or New York. In one respect they were the best press photographers I have encountered because they had been trained to make the most of what they had in the way of equipment and facilities—and they didn't have much, and what they did have was faulty.

The chief clerks were mostly Jews, the stenographers

The director of the anti-religious museum  
in the ancient Don Monastery near Moscow.  
He sits in the Father Superior's chair, at his  
desk—with how different a mission!





Comrade Smirdovitch, Soviet anti-Christ,  
director-general of anti-religious activities.  
From his study wall, his shadow extends over  
the land of Russia to dim that light by which  
men have lived for twenty centuries.

and flunkies of one sort or another were Russian. The Soviet stenographers are not as chic as our American ones and it's hard to judge their typing ability because the typewriters, on the whole, are not so good. In a few of the larger offices of directors of trusts there are modern, up-to-date American or German typewriters, which have been imported, with Russian letters.

The Foreign Department of *Soyuzphoto* was entirely composed of foreigners and Jews, except one, who was a Russian, presumably a holdover from the Old Régime, as he spoke excellent French.

They had adding machines, mostly American, but the old abacus from China is the main means of calculating in Russian business offices, and, strange as it may seem, I have heard American engineers claim that a really expert Russian abacus operator could calculate as rapidly as one could with a machine. They make a little clicking sound that is so much a part of the atmosphere that if all of them were to stop at once, probably everybody would look up to see what's missing. The abacus, unknown in America save in kindergartens or Chinese laundries, consists of wooden beads on wires set in a framework.

Working hours were eight per day and five working days a week with the sixth day what might be called Red Sunday. (No one refers any more to the day of the week in Russia. That's finished. You make an appointment for day after tomorrow and for the specific date. The calendar hasn't been changed, they simply have done away with days of the week and go by numbers. Officially the working day is eight hours, but actually there was a lot of hanging around the office and overtime work and espe-

cially so far as the photographers were concerned; they averaged ten, eleven or twelve hours when busy, just as they do in any country except France.

The photographers in the summertime wear no coats or cravats, mostly riding breeches and lightweight Russian boots. The girls were very neatly and simply dressed. Everything runs to white in summertime. Shoes are difficult to get, shoes that are any good; they always looked as though they were merely pasted together. Incidentally the prevalence of riding breeches and boots in Russia is a vogue set by the engineers; they form the idolized class because they are supposed to be scientists of one sort or another.

Discipline in *Soyuzphoto* offices and all the commercial trust offices in Russia is theoretically severe and just, but the easy-going, haphazard nature of all those people except the Jewish contingent in the key positions is anything but efficient. The Russian people are so accustomed to delay and to lack of office supplies and materials of all sorts that an employee invariably supplies a perfectly plausible if not legitimate alibi for anything he fails to do. The paper shortage is one of the great problems of Russia, because so much of it goes into printing money that all official stationery and interoffice stationery and interstate stationery is more or less the type butchers use in America to wrap meats. The envelopes are flimsy, the gum rarely sticks, so every office desk is equipped with a paste pot. What that paste is made of I was never able to learn; it was not perfumed, at least with anything fragrant. There was also a shortage of paste brushes; the custom was to stick your finger in and smear the paste over the paper. At least the paste stuck!



All still-photographs were taken with cameras so tiny that they would be considered amateurish in bourgeois lands. The original negatives are the dimension of two standard frames of a motion picture film. Only motion picture film has been successfully manufactured in Russia, and as these tiny still-cameras use only motion picture film the press photographers adapted themselves to making pictures on a negative approximately one-tenth the dimensions of negatives to which American press photographers are accustomed.

The thirty-five Moscow photographers had to do their own developing and there were only five dark-rooms, not much larger than telephone booths. In the summer the running water was so warm that, unless you used ice, your emulsion would become scratched; and getting the ice from the Ice Trust is more difficult than getting the photographs. So the *Soyuzphoto* bureaucracy rarely got ice from the Ice Trust bureaucracy, and most of the photographs shaped with the express purpose of showing the world that everything is marvelous in Russia were nullified because everything is not all marvelous in Russia.

Even such photos as got past the emulsion test were usually no good when finally developed. This did not worry the Photo Trust officials. They had a norm of so many photos to be produced each day. If the photos are no good, *nitchevo*, we have at least the satisfaction of having fulfilled our norm.

I asked Rohr why most of the photographs were no good.

"The Paper Trust," he told me sadly, "does not give us good paper."

After one of the big proletarian parades or celebrations of any kind, the boys would come rushing into *Soyuzphoto* to develop their stuff. Confusion that reached the point of pandemonium reigned in the overcrowded laboratories. The clerical force, which was packed and jammed into a series of badly lighted and primitively equipped offices, would try to help by swarming in and exhorting the harassed photographers to more speed so that the negatives which would probably be no good could be imperfectly dried and printed in time to be distributed over the USSR and the outside world—which would almost certainly refuse to print them, even when they were good.

The capitalistic papers, as a matter of fact, printed on an average of one out of every thousand photos sent out by *Soyuzphoto*; but *Soyuzphoto* cheerfully forwarded the norm, whether the prints were visible or not and, often, with the most incoherent and childish captions.

The photographers were paid two hundred roubles a month. They worked when there was work to do, night or day, with no NRA to guide them as to when to stop. Two hundred roubles is officially \$100; but in purchasing power it was equal to about eight dollars, except when there was enough food in the "closed shop" to buy at prices fixed by the government. There is a food shop for each factory, each white collar building and every other unit of the socialized system. These shops are closed to all but the workers of the particular organization under which they operate. No outsider could buy food from the *Soyuzphoto* closed shop, nor could Photo Trust employees buy food anywhere else; when they went on long jaunts to outlying sections of Moscow, or into the

suburbs, they had to take their food with them. Moscow has very few unrestricted restaurants, all with sky-high prices.

All the food in all closed shops was rationed. These shops, including the *Soyuzphoto* one, were always out of one or any necessary foods. However, photographers were always perfectly free to buy these missing necessities from any of the few restaurants, where a piece of pastry and a glass of weak tea costs five roubles, or two and one half per cent of a Soviet photographer's monthly salary. Usually they did without. This system permitted a photographer, if he had paid enough attention to birth control, to get by with one fairly good meal a day, tea and black bread for breakfast, and soup for dinner.

Added to this was the fact that the Photo Trust was always five or six weeks behind in paying salaries.

The shortage of money with which to pay workers was one of the great mysteries of Russia, because it was merely a matter of printing on paper. But there again was a physical and mechanical difficulty. The printing presses frequently broke down, shortage of paper often occurred and the workmen who printed the money did not put their whole heart into turning out money which, when officially stamped as money, was withheld from them.

All this time, while I was fighting for my own salary, I was paying Chumak, my assistant, 400 roubles a month, out of the money I didn't get from *Soyuzphoto*. They were supposed to shoulder half this financial burden and they did occasionally throw him a few roubles, complaining to me that I was "spoiling him." They also chided me for letting him use my food book, which per-

mitted him to buy food at low rates from the foreign store where I traded. When I told them I would rather spoil than exploit him, they were shocked, and protested that there was "no exploitation of workers in Russia."

In this connection, I remember asking a non-exploited *Soyuzphoto* photographer, who was grumbling about his lot, why he didn't go into some other sort of business.

"I am a photographer," he told me. "I know no other business. But even if I did, I couldn't change from one industry to another without getting a statement in writing from *Soyuzphoto* that my services were no longer required by the Photo Trust; and they never let anyone go, unless he has pull and can get out of it. What's more, if I simply quit here, they wouldn't try to get me back—they'd merely take up my food card, my friends would be afraid to give me food, and I'd starve to death."

This might not have been forced labor: after all, he wasn't compelled to work. He could die instead if he wished.

By the time I had heard a few dozen of these hard-luck stories, my resistance had got slightly lower and I dropped the matter of my contract with *Soyuzphoto*, which I never got.

Had I devoted the rest of my life to accomplishing all the projects I had in mind—with coöperation it could have been done in three months—I could have given the outside world an idea at least of the difficulties which the most sincere of those "building Socialism" have to overcome. Nor would the outside world have thought any less of the Bolsheviks and their industrial efforts, for learning that things do not run as smoothly as In-

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Worshippers in a church within a stone's throw from the Kremlin. They are chiefly women, for the young manhood of Russia is loathe to associate itself with anything that savors of religion.

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РЕАГИЯ  
ОХОТНО ОДЕРЖИ  
К УСОБИЛИ ДАК  
НЕСУСТР  
АВИА

ХРАМ  
ЭТО ДИКОГО ТИ  
ТЕР

РАТРАБ-  
СУЕ

НИКОСТАК  
ДЕКОРАЛ  
ДУХОВЕНСТ  
АКТИ

ВОЛОДАЖЕ  
ИЗБИРАНИИ  
ПЬЕРА

This church has been closed but its priceless ikons and treasures, being largely immovable, warrant its preservation as an art gallery. This unfortunate circumstance has, however, been counteracted by the huge atheistic poster on the right.



tourist advertisements, Intourist guides, the posters and the Soviet press are inclined to broadcast.

My first assignment as a Bolshevik photographer was to shoot their Holy of Holies.

"Inside the Kremlin with the tourists. What about it, Comrade Rohr?"

"The Kremlin? That can be easily arranged."

"Has it ever been photographed before?" I asked.

"No, I don't think so."

"If it is easily arranged, why hasn't it been done before?"

"It is difficult to get permission."

"If it is difficult to get permission, how is it easily arranged?"

"It will be easy to arrange for you, Comrade Abbe," Rohr said with an ingratiating smile.

Twice a week a group of tourists were admitted to the Kremlin under supervision of the Kremlin guards who saw to it that no one got near Stalin's headquarters. Each tourist's name was on a list. It was Rohr's job to have my name and that of my assistant on one of these lists. For two weeks, twice a week, Chumak and I arrived with the tourists and were refused admittance by the officer of the guard.

"Your names are not on the list today," he would say firmly but not disagreeably.

"But they told us at *Soyuzphoto* that our names were on the list!"

"Who is *Soyuzphoto*?" the Captain asked, not sarcastically, but apparently out of curiosity. Then Chumak

would give a highly colored and garbled account of just who was the *Soyuzphoto*.

On the day of our last sally in our siege of the citadel, Chumak browbeat his way to the telephone in the orderly's office and talked with the Fourth or Fifth Assistant Adjutant to the Commandant. The latter said he had received no orders regarding us, in fact had never heard of us. When Chumak reported this to me, he said pathetically:

"I told him you were the man who had been received by Stalin in that same Kremlin."

"And what did he say to that?"

"He said you'd better see Stalin about it."

We finally got into the Kremlin and took photographs, but it was not due to the prestige or efforts of *Soyuzphoto*. On the contrary, it was the Foreign Office who finally got the Commandant on the telephone; Padolski told the Commandant that I was a distinguished journalist. My wife crashed the gate by grabbing Chumak's camera and walking in behind us.

The group of strange and incongruous palaces, buildings, military barracks, an entire battery of field artillery pieces in the midst of seven churches, bell towers, parade grounds and living quarters for high Soviet officials enclosed within the triangle formed by the ancient brick Kremlin Wall stands high above the rest of Moscow. The view of the city in all directions between the numerous watchtowers is superb. Just outside the walls on each side is noisy, bustling, confusing, clanging, honking Moscow. Within there is peace and quiet and an atmosphere of well-ordered existence and, in the summertime, fresh air denied proletarian Moscow.

Inside one of the churches we saw the coronation chair of the Czars, who were crowned in Moscow even after St. Petersburg became the capital. The dimly lighted walls were partly covered with scaffolding upon which workmen were scraping off one of the many layers of religious painting, so that the original paintings, supposed to be the finest, would be exposed to a posterity which might regard them as perverted examples of art and craftsmanship. A few ikons still remain, but the guard told me that the better ones had been removed to anti-religious museums.

The ingrained and typical character of the Slavic people to be grandiose was evidenced by three objects from the past. First, the biggest cannon ever cast, never intended to be fired despite the solid iron cannonballs still piled up in a pyramid beside the gun carriage. This great gun was cast to impress foreign ambassadors to old Russia with the military strength of an army which had always been poorly equipped. Second, the tower which Ivan the Terrible built: it might appropriately be called "Unemployment Tower" as it was constructed to give work during a period of depression. Third, on the ground beside this tower is the largest bell ever cast, and, although intended to be rung, never was. It crashed to earth and broke, when halfway up into the specially constructed tower; and there it still sits.

The tourists were mostly interested in the unbelievably ornate costumes, jewelry, armor, sleighs, coaches, embroidery, lace, plate, which are on exhibition in a museum which was formerly a wing of the palace.

I had to shoot fast as the armed guard who never left my side kept urging me along, preventing me from shoot-

ing, for instance, sentry boxes which are on the list of forbidden subjects in the USSR. Photographing Stalin's Kremlin was much more difficult than photographing Stalin in his Kremlin.

As soon as you get one degree lower than Stalin himself, you are up against individuals who live in constant fear of exceeding their authority, of authorizing something which may turn out wrong and get them into trouble. The trouble with Bolsheviks, particularly the very likable Slavs, is that they are inevitably equipped with a sense of humor, of honest hospitality and of friendliness. And they are always afraid that their courtesy to a foreigner may finally land them in prison, in a forced labor camp or under the ground. Nor are their fears imaginary.

A sudden violent, typically Russian thunderstorm descended on the Kremlin just as I was taking my last shot. It seemed to symbolize the forces of terror which have pervaded that world's most picturesque citadel.

It was a week before I saw the prints from my Kremlin photos and another ten days before a friendly secretary in the *Soyuzphoto* told me confidentially that the prints had finally been sent abroad. But when she showed me a set of prints, I knew my time had been pretty well wasted. They were flat and gray and had very little chance of being reproduced in the bourgeois publications from which I was to derive *valuta* to recompense me for "building Socialism."

But at least I had started to work for the Bolsheviks!

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## CHAPTER IX

### *DATCHA LIFE*

THE crème de la crème of foreign engineering, journalism and parlor Bolshevism were gathered under our *datcha* roof; they overflowed into our private forest and astonished the neighborhood with song and laughter. A string of autos lined the dusty road in front of our white picket fence; they represented the Foreign Office, the British Embassy and the privileged classes of Soviet Russia, gathered for the Abbe Housewarming which opened the summer season at Cliasma.

Madame the Wife of Foreign Commissar Litvinov was the ranking social celebrity of the party, which numbered thirty adults and fifteen children. She was there in her capacity as Ivy Low of the *Moscow Daily News*, the greatest—and only—English newspaper in the Soviet Union. Even Padolski was there with his wife and three little wide-eyed Padolskis, who had never seen anything quite like this in all their short proletarian existence.

Out in the *datcha* garden my little daughter Patty was struggling with a fish nearly twice as big as she was, scraping off its scales in preparation for the feast that evening. Most of the guests, as is the custom in food-

shortage Russia, had brought their own victuals; the fish was in the way of a surprise. This was a once-in-a-blue-moon party; as a rule Soviet citizens dare not attend parties of foreign bourgeoisie.

My *datcha* was a charming log cottage big enough for two families. As a matter of fact, it housed five families, though none of the other four were as numerous as ours. There were twelve rooms, an acre of forest shade, a tennis court, electric lights. We had the use of three rooms, a grand piano and a balcony.

The other correspondents and summer visitors, both bourgeois and proletarian, had *datchas* nearby. The opening day of the season—July to October—the roads to Cliasma, which I might call the Newport of Russia, are clogged with the automobiles of Soviet trust and government officials. As there are almost no private autos in Russia, the fortunate bureaucrats motor out of sweltering Moscow in the official cars of their government department or trusts, behind official chauffeurs, like pre-La Guardia Tammany Hall Solons out for a pleasure trip in city limousines at the expense of the toiling masses who must remain all summer in the melting-pot of cement and stone and concrete. The Moscow masses, like those in New York, must journey vacationwards, if they get any vacation, in trains packed to the ceilings with their sweating human cargoes. And they must bring their food with them.

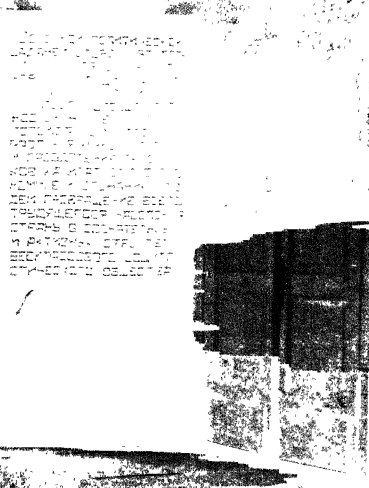
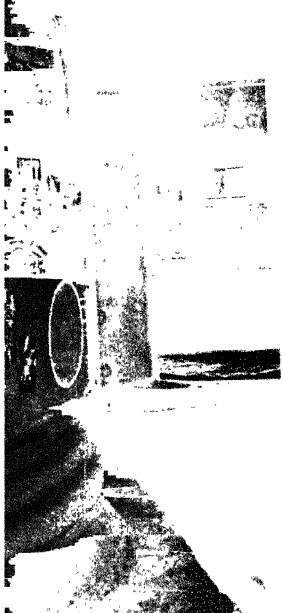
In the Soviet system of one-for-all-and-all-for-one, whatever edibles are produced in the country are collected and sent into urban centers like Moscow, to be distributed pro rata amongst 160,000,000 perpetually hungry stomachs. The happy workers must get their ra-

The hand of a fallen saint raised as if in supplication to Heaven from amid the holocaust created by the anti-religious propaganda of the Soviet Union.





# Ist der Kampf für den S



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Anti-religious museum. The banner informs German tourists that the battle against religion is the battle for socialism. The grotesque figure, a bishop, served in a burlesque of Christianity in a famous Moscow theatre.

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tioned provisions from the closed food stores of their trust and carry it out again to the country, where it was produced.

Although the foreign colony and the Soviet bureaucrats' *datchas* often adjoin, they remain two distinct "sets" and do not mingle. Only around the town pumps, of necessity social centers, you can pass the time of day in neighborly fashion with the Bolsheviks. As it is a Cliasma custom to go about the streets naked from the waist up, the women barefooted and barelegged, these town-pump gatherings had a certain delightful informality lacking in the staid public squares of dignified New England.

The village itself is nothing but wide lawns, two narrow wheel tracks down the center, the rest green grass cropped close by goats and cattle if any. The *datchas* are set back from the streets, behind picket fences in the midst of the inevitable pine and white birch forests. The best *datchas* of all are owned by the GPU, the top dog in Red Society. Their summer homes are screened from the vulgar gaze of the hoi polloi, proletariat and bourgeoisie.

The men played billiards politely and deftly during the long summer afternoons while their women reclined handsomely on garden furniture shaded from the red sun by pretty aristocratic parasols.

From a neighboring pine tree your social investigator noted some well-groomed tennis courts, dotted here and there with Soviet "Junior League" girls and well set-up young bloods, all fittingly attired in tennis togs. I fell off my perch in a dead faint, however, when after a well-played rally on the part of a lithe lady her male prole-

tarian opponent met her at the net, clicked his rubber heels and gallantly kissed her hand.

All summer with a certain morbid fascination we used to watch a sanctimonious, long-haired fellow, head of the Soviet Flax Trust, unload all his boxes of bulging food. No standing in the workers' queue for hours to buy, record on his book and receive his food ration. He was a contented man; he had found his racket.

Our store, for the exclusive use of diplomats and correspondents and closed even to GPU officials, gave us practically everything we needed. Of course we couldn't get potatoes for a month; and if we were not at the store in the early morning, there was no milk. There had been a shortage of milk in Russia since the peasants slaughtered and ate two-thirds of the USSR's livestock as a protest against overcollectivization.

My book being for five persons, we thought it would be selfish not to share it and so gave Chumak the use of it for his family. Open gossip in the village accused those careless, thoughtless, mean Abbes of buying up all the food and hoarding it. Then I began to understand how my assistant managed to live like a lord, both in his town apartment and his private *datcha* not far from mine, for we ran through the food book and learned that in one month we had bought seven hundred eggs, fifty cans of fish, sixty kilos of sugar, forty kilos of flour, one hundred and eighty loaves of bread, to mention only a few items.

None of us could remember having eaten so much food during the past thirteen years of our travels. I therefore hinted to Chumak to leave a few fish and crumbs at the store so that the poor old British Embassy gang wouldn't

starve or our colleagues of the press take to eating bark off the trees.

Litvinovna, wife of the Foreign Commissar but not a Communist, was a frequent visitor. Sitting on the edge of her cot, she would discuss with us the big problems of the world's biggest collective problem, the USSR. She brought her own bedding and slept in the corner of the porch. But never before sunrise or before we had brewed ourselves steaming cups of Russian tea while continuing our conference. I learned more about the working out of Communism in that ancient land than I could get from a dozen dry technical treatises on the subject. As a conversationalist she is a wonder. If there is anything she hasn't read, seen or heard about, it hasn't yet happened.

She liked to pick up some janitor's child and bring him out in the country for fresh air, sunshine, *valuta* food and all the things janitors' children aren't getting in the Workers' Paradise. She would bring contributions of food from her own allowance, which was not as liberal as one might expect, considering her position.

Perhaps her rôle as wife of a Commissar was difficult to reconcile with being a part of our indiscriminate weekend forums; at all events, when I commented on her penetrating opinions, both favorable and unfavorable, she never returned again.

On free days—Red Sunday, every sixth day, is the day of rest—there were as many as a hundred bathing nude on the Cliasma River's diminutive beach at a time. An imaginary line is drawn across the river; the females remain upstream, the males down. But there was no

opaque barricade; consequently, no men on stilts and no periscoping.

Not all of the girls were beautiful or symmetrical, which was but another wise move on the part of Nature. Pregnancy was nothing to whisper or titter about, nothing more scandalous than a fruit-laden tree. Old boys who had lost their figures, and who would have been comic in bathing costumes, were just old boys who had lost their figures; big, broad-gauged peasant women washing each other's backs merely presented the fact that the Russian peasant is a cleanly person—in the summertime. Varicose veins, hernias, hunched backs, flabby breasts merely set off the loveliness of straight bodies, beautiful legs, maidenly stomachs and lithe movements. Here were natural people whom civilization had not yet spoiled. When I thought back on the "indecent" bathing costumes of the fashionable beaches I had visited in other lands, I blushed, or I would have had not my coat of tan been so thick.

Yet one disturbing element arose. A few, a very few, of the younger generation, already launched in building Socialism, appeared in bathing costumes. They got some reproving glances from wrinkled grandmothers and grandfathers. But with the breeziness of upstarts they saw it through. While I attracted no particular attention lying about nude on the banks of the river or swimming about dressed like a fish, I did start a stampede by trying to photograph the natives similarly attired. The young and lovely Soviet nymphs took flight like startled deer at the sight of me with camera in hand. But a burly peasant woman waded over to my side of the stream and told me in no uncertain words that I should

be ashamed of myself. Not for being nude but for shooting photos of nude persons. As we stood there in our birthday suits facing each other while I argued that there couldn't be any harm in photographing that which was done so naturally and without the least suggestion of vulgarity, a delegation of three more stark-naked peasant men and women came over.

"Good day, Comrade," said a spokesman, "we don't like you to take photographs of us bathing, because we are bathing for our pleasure and to get clean, and you are a foreigner."

"Do people wear clothes in bathing in Europe?" asked one.

"It is because we are nude, that you try to photograph us," they said.

"But why," I asked, "if everyone bathes nude should there be any objections to photographs?"

"It is silly to bathe with clothes on, therefore we bathe nude. It is the only time we ever are nude and we do not allow foreigners to exploit us," they said.

The collectivized wheat swayed drunkenly in the late August breeze, overripe and pleading to be reaped. Scattered billowy clouds ambled across a blue sky, their occasional shadows accentuating the sunny picture of plenty. The earth which is Russia had generously responded to a hungry people's need for food.

Every morning of our last week at the *datcha* I had passed this field on the way to the river. The blood of New England farmers simmered in my brain at the possible impending tragedy: just at that moment when veg-

etables were temporarily stopping the gap, the villagers were short on rations. Yet wheat enough to feed the entire village through the winter was moaning to be garnered. In a few days it would be too late.

I asked a neighbor, a Russian, what lay behind this seeming negligence. It was true, he said, that the collectivized farmers had only to reach out for sufficient potential food to enable them to laugh at the rigors of the coming winter, but by the time the required quota had been turned over to the State grain collectors, there would not be nearly enough left for the natives of the village.

"Ah, yes," I countered, "but somebody must feed the industrial workers, the men and women who are struggling to build factories which will in turn manufacture clothing, household necessities, and things which cannot be made on a farm."

This statement only brought forth a shrug of my neighbor's shoulders. It was a dangerous subject for conversation. You never know in Soviet Russia to whom you may be talking. My neighbor's expression denoted that he held his own opinions; and while he knew me as a foreigner and not likely to quote him, what he did not say could not be used against him—presumably.

Presumably, because we both knew a simple-minded old woman who had just been on trial in the local Soviet court. Her husband had been shipped off to Siberia because he stoutly but indiscreetly resisted the summary occupation of his home by a high official of a Moscow trust. The woman herself had had no part in the resistance; but in the hands of the prosecutor she had uttered statements which the court construed as proof



Soviet daughters may hang their clothes on the hickory limb and women and men may bathe practically together—but the former will be upstream, the latter down.



that she was counter-revolutionary-minded! Upon being sentenced to follow her husband to Siberia she dropped dead, thereby doing her bit towards relieving the overcrowding of trains to Siberia.

One morning, as I lay stretched against the grassy incline of a drainage trench, I was awakened from a doze by the sound of a reaping machine. At last something was going to be done! Even if the villagers didn't get all they needed from their wheatfield, at least the workers in Moscow would benefit.

The reaping machine was not one of those highly colored contraptions which hold out such bright promise on the posters plastered all over Russia. It was a somewhat rickety affair drawn by two apathetic horses whose hearts were not attuned to "building Socialism." Nor did the man driving the horses present the picture of the peasant eager to go forward shoulder to shoulder with the workman and the soldier in the creation of a new world.

Instead, he slouched on his steel saddle, except when driven to anger by the villainous crows. This army of black-feathered scavengers must have numbered five thousand disciplined, orderly marauders.

A noisy shotgun fired into their midst might have brought down a few and frightened them far enough away to have at least left the man and the horses to labor in peace—for a while. But there is a scarcity of powder and shot among other things in Russia. Ammunition is being stored up for an anticipated invasion of bourgeois and capitalistic armies. What little is available to the peasants would come in handy in bringing down game a little later on.

The crows seemed to know all this. They swarmed and swooped about the peasant and the horses. The combined fanning of their vigorous wings vied with the steady breeze from the south. Worst of all, these hellish black birds screamed hoarse taunts in the very ears of the harassed man and beasts they grazed in their flight.

They seemed to symbolize the fleet-winged army of bureaucrats, active parasites, conniving politicians, which today swarm over the workers of Russia. Brains they have. Intelligence of a sinister sort. But they create nothing. Produce nothing but dissatisfaction and bewilderment in the minds of a people trying to reap something under great handicaps.

Crows have prospered in Russia as scavengers. But there is not much there to scavenge these days, despite the colossal waste due to inefficiency, haste and the presence of small-caliber men in big-caliber jobs . . . men who produce nothing except sabotage. Sabotage of the spirit of a brave and humorous people.

The end of our summer and the return to Moscow was marked by an incident which terrified us but also afforded us a view of Soviet hospitals. My daughter Patty was bitten by a dog and taken at once to the Kremlin hospital—thanks to wire pulling at the Foreign Office. This place is for the exclusive use of the highest government and Party officials.

The day after, we went to the Pasteur Institute where Patty was given a sheaf of coupons; as she took her place in the queue of bitten Bolsheviks and had the hy-

podermic needle of hydrophobia serum stuck into her stomach, they tore off the first ticket.

The injection room was large, light and airy; the windows nearly down to the ground so there was always an audience on the street peering through at this interesting procession of pampered Comrades. Taking her cue from the Russians, who are, of all people that I have ever known, the most disdainful of pain, Patty took her first shot like a sportsman. Every day for twenty days somebody had to take her all the way across Moscow in a crowded tram for her injection. She never tired of the experience as she made a lot of new friends there and by that time was capable of discussing in Russian the many different ways in which one can be bitten by dogs, cats, rats and other animals.

The Russians all over the Union have gone mad about science, surgery and all the bourgeois innovations which they are being taught and which make life more interesting.

There was one enormous Russian, six feet four and weighing about three hundred pounds. He spoke English. I facetiously said:

"It must have taken a big dog to bite you."

With no suggestion of a smile, he looked down at me and:

"It was a mouse bit me," he answered.

"Surely you mean a rat."

Sadly, even apologetically:

"No," he replied. "It was a mouse."

That same Russian, before the Revolution, would have left the whole matter of life or death, sickness or health to nature or fate; today he welcomed the opportunity of

being scientifically treated for a slight nip from a not altogether dead mouse he had taken out of a mousetrap.

Of all the patients with whom I talked not one bore any resentment toward the dog which had bitten him. With scarcely enough food to more than keep them alive, the Russians outside the cities divide their meager rations with the inevitable dog family. Cats are practically unknown in the part of Russia that I saw; I presume they were mistaken for rabbits and eaten.

As a matter of fact there actually seems to be a type of proletarian dog. I have never seen any breed of dog in any part of the world I have been in which corresponds to the Russian family dog. It just seems a mixture of all varieties. They sleep all day and bark all night—a custom of the country and nobody bothers about it.

The hundreds of nude bodies to which I had become accustomed at the Cliasma swimming hole never seemed quite so strange as this long queue of exposed abdomens at the Pasteur Institute. The line of dog, goat, horse, mouse bitten presented a bizarre sight. Great broad-beamed peasant women, proletarian workers, Red Army men, white collar men with no collars, even a long-haired priest in the daily line-up of customers. Their conversation was principally about the benefits of science which they hoped would sooner or later provide food as well as industrial equipment for New Russia.

I have seen Russians having jaw teeth extracted without the slightest change of expression on their faces, no gripping of the arms of the chair, no closing of the eyes. There is no use of anæsthetics, these being a luxury. I have seen an appendicitis operation without an anæsthetic and the silent agony was reflected only by the gray pallor of

the face of the patient and great beads of sweat. . . . I have seen an automobile run a man down and crush his leg, while he made no sound. Russian women make no more fuss over childbirth than they do over doing a washing.

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## CHAPTER X

### *HIGH LIFE IN RUSSIA*

SEE Russia with Alexander Woollcott—and like it! Ride like a swan over the world's roughest roads in a Chrysler.

No shocks. Either to the spine or to preconceived notions of how Socialism is built. Tovarisch Woollcott will broadcast his version of your impressions from his sagging corner of "the world's first sensible motor car." On his padded knee he will write his shouts and murmurs of what you would have seen along the roadside, if you hadn't been going sixty-five miles an hour, with your attention riveted on "Town Crier Woollcott."

Join Elmer Rice on his return tour of Red Russia. Hear his incomparable daughter Peggy give off wise-cracks for her playwright Papa's next radical play. See Bobbie, son and heir to the Rice royalties, after his first radical year at Harvard. Get Mrs. Rice to tell you of their last Russian tour at seventy pre-baloney dollars per day. Picnic with these we-the-people under happy white birch trees and observe Madame Litvinov dining on bourgeois victuals prepared by the Intourist caterer!

Let rollicking Richard Watts Junior make you ac-



quainted with Russia's most ravishing barmaids. See and hear him initiate you into the quaint ceremony of wangling vodka down the throat without swallowing or blinking. See the fascinating cinema and theater of Russia through the filmy eyes of America's foremost film critic.

No longer necessary to have a letter of introduction from Senator Borah to meet the right sort of people in Red Russia. Go to your corner drug store, where there is an Intourist office and book your tour now, before the dollar goes as low as the rouble. See Russia through pink-colored lorgnettes provided by Intourist. "Recognition" has brought this unparalleled opportunity within your reach. You have only to bend forward. Intourist will catch you when you fall.

Such are samples of the slogans of advertisements in "class publications" this summer—facetious, of course, but hardly fantastic.

To the resident foreigners in Russia—correspondents, engineers, embassy attachés and their wives, all bourgeois in their tastes—the delicate rose tint of the officially supplied lorgnettes through which to view the Great Experiment, soon wears off. But the transient "guests of the government," who flit blithely and briefly through the USSR in their high-powered motor cars, see only what they are supposed to see, and rarely remain long enough to have their illusions dispelled by the grimy, pointing finger of Old Man Reality.

Elmer Rice undoubtedly would be a sincere Communist whether or not he approved of the rough-house methods of the masons who are laying the corner-stone of Proletarianism. But he was not even afforded the

chance of seeing them in action. The fault did not lie with Comrade Rice but with his interpreter "Ernest"—who successfully and miraculously finegled the American playwright through the many obstacles of travel which cause the ordinary tourist to gnash his teeth and express violent opinions on Soviet bureaucracy.

Ernest is an A-1 top-notch blue ribbon wangler and the way he got Elmer Rice about Russia, over and through and above all Red tape of minor government officials, should warrant an entire chapter in the History of Wangling. He is also an interpreter par excellence and therefore probably, like most Soviet interpreters, a link between the visiting foreigner and the GPU, who want to know all about the secrets and business of visiting foreigners. Ernest learned English in six months, spoke it profusely and with very little accent. He piloted the Rice family all over Russia with the greatest celerity possible, much to their surprise and everybody else's. Mr. Rice became more and more astounded that Ernest always obtained in such matters as easing the Rices into seats and berths on trains while mobs of Russians protested vainly, shoving in ahead of the inevitable queues to get them waited on immediately and generally smoothing their path through the rocky road of Red tape. Finally he asked his guide what were the magic words he spoke to officials to produce such amazing results. Ernest shrugged his broad shoulders and replied:

"Excuse me, I tell them you are the American Ambassador!"

And this fully two years before we recognized Russia!

I recall the enthusiasm of another group of "visiting firemen"—the American Hirsch family—who came

bursting into our room at the New Moscow Hotel one day, radiating luxury and good cheer. Even in our one-room-for-five they walked as if just off the promenade deck of a de luxe liner. They were just back from a trip to America. Dr. Hirsch also is helping to build Socialism, as expert consultant to the Chemical Trust. The Hirsches, always a little homesick for their yacht in Florida, managed to adapt themselves to primitive Moscow by riding in a Rolls-Royce, occupying a suite at the best hotel and dozing off on the bed which bore the last of the Czars into the then non-proletarian world.

Of course, Dr. Hirsch has an adequate salary and a generous expense account (in dollars) from the Chemical Trust, and an unshaken confidence in the future of Bolshevik Russia.

Every small American town has its corner drug store, every city its Elks' Club or like center of social intercourse.

Moscow has its Metropole bar, focal point of a glittering bourgeois society in the dull setting of Proletarianism. It is just an alcove off the main dining room of the hotel, yet famous as the starting point of many an American friendship, where roving drinkers from (at that time) dry America, fed up on the glories of building Communism and tourist glimpses of the Kremlin, rushed to quench their thirst and feast their eyes on the Soviet barmaids.

The barmaids in the big *valuta* hotels are of old Russian families, girls largely of aristocratic or bourgeois homes, who do not quite fit into office or more rigorous

work. Theirs is a good job while it lasts because they are in close proximity to food from the restaurant and the kitchen. They meet nothing but foreigners and Russians love to come into contact with foreigners. They are to a considerable extent decoys in that they report all significant conversations among foreigners to the GPU, and the danger of their position is they might disclose more information than they receive or be suspected of doing so. However, when they do not measure up to Soviet expectations, they are liquidated—either sent to Siberia or disposed of in some other manner.

I know one instance where a barmaid at the Metropole Hotel became so friendly with a member of a foreign embassy that it became a matter of suspicion as to which one was getting the most information out of the other. The situation became so dangerous that the embassy man married the girl. Unfortunately the British Ambassador could not reconcile what might have been considered a gentlemanly action with the possible loss of prestige to His Majesty's Embassy, so the young diplomat left the service.

The barmaids wear evening dress; as they are hand-picked for good looks, you enjoy their company. At the Metropole bar, they will dance with you on the ballroom floor which adjoins the bar.

In the bars of the hotels for foreigners you can get what you wish as readily as in Berlin or London: whiskey, cognac, liqueurs, apéritifs, beer, at prices comparable to the better sort of American speakeasies in Prohibition days. Vodka is of course cheaper and when you have more or less settled in Russia, you prefer it as it is potent and digestible.

Foreigners who stay the year round in Moscow naturally get a more intimate and more disillusioning glimpse of the realities of present-day Russia. But it doesn't faze them; they have a swell time anyway.

The Soviet Government may not approve of the Social Whirl of the correspondents; if so, they do nothing to stop it. They know that visitors and residents from capitalistic countries, especially the gentlemen of the press, must be kept satisfied—or their reports might not be so favorable. So the Foreign Office shuts its eyes to the gay social round of resident foreigners. But it reserves the right to shoot or liquidate Russians who attend these bourgeois revelries. I have the names and former addresses of several Soviet citizens who have been shot for succumbing to the lure of bourgeois hospitality.

There were Russians at Walter Duranty's famous Christmas party, in 1927—but they were there in the capacity of paid entertainers, a gypsy orchestra of three who sang with great gusto as they strummed on their *balalaikas*.

Bare feminine shoulders predominated; that was before the coal rationing which affected even Mr. Duranty in later years. There were caviar, turkey and cranberry sauce, wines from the Caucasus and whiskey from the abandoned stocks of the British Embassy crowd—who had departed in a huff because their Foreign Office in London had failed to discover the incriminating papers in the Arcos raid. Dancing was in progress on the polished hardwood floor of the huge salon. Some of the guests had daringly bootlegged in their evening clothes that night, despite official antipathy toward such bourgeois fripperies. Duranty stood, his back to the crackling

white birch logs in the great open fireplace—a super-luxury in Moscow—and entertained his guests with his brilliant conversational faculties.

Few races and nationalities were not represented that night; although foreign correspondents predominated. Lithe, dark-skinned Sylvia Chen, daughter of the noted Chinese revolutionist, Eugene Chen, danced solo numbers to thunderous applause. Gossip with an international flavor lent spice to the evening. Finally the party broke up and as the guests stepped out into the twenty-below-zero streets the waning moonlight softly illumined a scene that could not fail to warm the cockles of hearts which feel deeply for exploited masses, in the abstract.

A line of one-horse sleighs—all the *droshkies* in Moscow—reached all the way up to the frozen Tswirskaya Boulevard and around the corner. The *ishvoschki*—drivers of the old-style public conveyances—had somehow got wind of the bourgeois party and had built a huge bonfire in the street to keep warm while waiting for fares during the long icy hours.

When I returned to Russia in 1932, Duranty was no longer Moscow's reigning host. He had gone in for "building Socialism" in a big way and had deserted his luxurious quarters for more modest ones on the other side of the river. Eugene Lyons, of the UP, had taken over Duranty's position, entertaining in the former Mexican Embassy which now belonged to one of the few foreigners who wangled a concession from the Russian Government during the NEP (New Economic Policy) days: Dr. Hammer, an American pencil manufacturer, incidentally one of the few to make a fortune out of the

Bolsheviks. Alas! he got his money out of the country only to lose it in the American stock market crash.

All good things have to come to an end. Suddenly Dr. Hammer found himself in bad odor with the Soviet Government and in order to recoup his official standing he arranged for the *Moscow Daily News* to move in with the outraged protesting Lyons family.

Soon the entire staff of the *News*, including some forty reporters, was cooking its meals on the Lyons' stove, consuming them here and there about the Lyons' mansion and scrubbing themselves and each other in the Lyons' bath.

I shall never forget my last sight of the transformed kitchen. The four proletarian cooks were rattling pans and dishes and fanning the wood fire, blowing the choking smoke all over the room. Billie Lyons was jockeying for a hot spot on the stove, after having hunted for half an hour for her utensils. Her cook had locked herself in the toilet downstairs and was weeping audibly. A staff photographer stood on a chair waving a wet print over the entire stove, trying to dry it. Up and down the Lyons' once-dignified staircase tramped a steady stream of proletarian journalists. Gene and Billie had to go to the public baths to get clean. And with them went their social prestige.

Linton Wells, Hearst man, and Betty, his charming wife were the next social leaders of the Foreign Colony, perhaps because of Wells' inclusion in *Who's Who in America*, and his wife's presentation at the Court of St. James's. Wells arrived in Moscow in 1932, with his young wife and a wire-haired fox terrier. They proceeded systematically to become the social leaders of the Moscow Foreign Colony.

I dined once with the British Ambassador and his wife, Sir Esmond and Lady Ovey—and never before had I experienced the feeling of being in one civilization and looking straight into another.

The Embassy had once been the palatial home of the Czarist Sugar King. We lunched in the grand salon, served by an English butler and a Russian waiter. Through the Embassy windows the medieval Kremlin towered like the castle of an ogre. By rights, the Ambassador should have been in doublet and hose, Lady Ovey in great billowing gold-brocaded skirts and I shouldn't have been there at all. It would be the British, with their imperial dislike for the Bolsheviki, who would set up their Embassy right under the eaves of the citadel of Proletarianism, the Moscow River serving as a moat without a drawbridge.

Had such a thing been conceivable, Stalin, strolling along the parapet above the Kremlin Wall, might have waved to the British Ambassador as he dined on his upper balcony of an evening. I regretted that my position didn't permit me to ask Sir Esmond what he thought of things across the moat.

I knew that he'd come to Russia decidedly "pink": but his "pink" sympathies had been considerably upset by contact with the rough-house tactics of hard-boiled unsportsmanlike Bolshevik officials, and he was soon to leave Moscow for a more congenial atmosphere, his underlying blue blood boiled down to a deep indigo.

But Sir Esmond and Gene Lyons (and myself, of course) were by no means the only foreign colonists who'd come to the Promised Land with high hopes and left with sour stomachs. There was Malcolm Muggeridge,



with credentials from England's great liberal organ, the *Manchester Guardian*, whose brilliant satire on Russia—*Winter in Moscow*—has recently appeared in the book-stalls.

Muggeridge came in full of sympathies for Communism and left to write a book most convincingly damning the brutal process of "building Socialism." Of all the naïve-looking boy reporters I've seen arrive in Russia to escape the horrors of capitalism, Muggie was the naïvest looking. Resident foreign journalists who've been "exposed" regard arriving "pinks" the way the inmates of an alimony jail do virgin bridal couples. And blue-eyed Muggeridge, with his ready smile, his gorgeous sense of humor and his brilliant mental equipment, had the veterans leaning over in the pews frothing at the mouth as he walked blushing down the aisle with that old streetwalking "Dictatorship of the Proletariat." We'd all been married to that gal at one time or another and knew what she looked like the morning after, brushing her false teeth, putting synthetic Red on her thin lips and nagging us into combing the tangles out of her home-made toupée.

Plenty of splendid books could be written on the subject. Cholerton could do one up nicely, even a ten-volume set. William Henry Chamberlin, who, with Cholerton, probably knows more than anyone else about the hole that Soviet Russia has fallen into could do it too. Chamberlin reports *facts* for his *Christian Science Monitor*, but he has plenty stored in his head that have never appeared on the pages of that fact-ridden newspaper.

It was at the Chamberlins' apartment that one of the

most successful correspondent parties—the “*Valuta Party*”—took place.

The correspondents had been suddenly notified that they could no longer buy provisions from *Insnab*—a combined food store, barber shop and beauty parlor which catered only to foreigners—with roubles “bootlegged” at thirty-five for a dollar. The foreign colony had been obtaining food in unlimited quantities, some of it imported, by purchasing roubles from the Black Bourse, thus stocking up at prices which made these depression countries look plutocratic. The Bolos, aware that their own people were starving by droves and that cable correspondents were not too pro-Communist in their newspaper reportages, announced the ultimatum. That night the last of the bootlegged food and drink were shoved into faces saddened by the thought that this was the last time.

But the fact remains that the foreign correspondents in Moscow have the pick of food, drink and living quarters; and apartment hunting in Moscow offers surprises unknown to prosaic America. You may draw an ancient Czarist palace on the banks of the Moscow River, a suite of rooms in a swanky hotel, or, as the Lyons did, the old Mexican Embassy.

Stan Richardson’s predecessor moved into a new apartment one day and observed a strange-appearing urn standing on a bookcase. The servant who came with the apartment informed him solemnly that the vessel contained the ashes of *his* predecessor in office—dear old Whiffen, who had succumbed to a disease and now remained in this shape. After a few macabre weeks of pondering this phenomenon, the correspondent solved the

problem by taking the ashes up in a plane and scattering them over Moscow.

Although they enjoy the social life of Moscow—all grumblings to the contrary, the correspondents and their wives are always on the alert for an excuse which will allow them “shore leave” in other countries. The star alibi is the excuse that the correspondent must go to the Berlin, Paris or London office of his paper to discuss privately with his chief important matters so confidential that they cannot be broadcast by cable or censorable mail. This one, however, has been worked so often that it has begun to wear a bit thin.

Sometimes the Soviet Government itself steps in and ministers to the travel urge of the restless correspondents, who sometimes get tired of riding about Moscow in their chauffeured foreign automobiles. The men of the press are given free sleeping-car trips to flowering Soviet industrial plants, a chance to report to the outside world the great industrial strides of the Five-Year Plan.

On these trips the correspondents travel in greater luxury than they enjoy in Moscow, and grumble morosely when they have to look at a machine or factory. When their train, often a “special,” halts beside some scene of rural poverty, they sit looking out the windows and, their mouths stuffed with government caviar, deplore the plight of the starving peasant.

The various embassy functions and the Foreign Office affairs are far more stately and formal in tone than the exuberant correspondent parties. Bourgeois diplomats

in Russia, even those who are slightly "pink," maintain an air that is wholly capitalistic if not downright aristocratic. And the Foreign Office parties are not far behind—presided over in person by Madame the Wife of the Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

I can remember the time when a slightly inebriated American correspondent stood in the moonlit garden of the British Embassy and serenaded the astounded diplomats and their wives. But such occurrences are the exception.

Now that the shield of the United States Government is hanging over the door of our embassy in Moscow, the social life of Americans in Russia will at last be legitimized. We daredevils who visited and resided in pre-recognition Russia will, however, reserve the privilege of patronizing those arriving after it is "safe." It detracts not a whit from our glory that our risks and hardships during our covered-wagon days in the USSR were not very risky; and that our covered wagons were at least the well-chauffeured foreign cars of the correspondents and embassies, with the high-powered "tourist" Lincolns and Rolls-Royces. The fact remains that when we first crossed that little strip of No Man's Land between Poland and the USSR all of us fondly believed we were risking our lives.

Fritz, the bartender in the Central Hotel in Berlin, will show you a guest book filled with signatures and wisecracks, pasted-in rouble notes, Russian hotel bills, theater tickets, etc.—the only Social Register of Moscow's bourgeois "Four Hundred." I trust the custodian of this documentary book will have the good taste to draw a heavy red line under the signature of the last

person to "come out" of Russia before Recognition started functioning officially. We of the old families wish the new all the best; but naturally the line must be drawn somewhere.

In the old days our resident correspondents did the work of ambassador and consul. Before Recognition an American who had had a hammer or a sickle dropped on his head, rushed from one correspondent's residence to another in quest of sympathy, advice, fraternal indignation and help, gathering in his wake compatriots who usually wound up throwing a consolation party in some home, hotel room or the Metropole bar.

Now he'll just go to our embassy, register his complaint and let it go at that . . . probably without even getting a glass of tea to soothe his injured feelings.

But it was swell while it lasted—and if we didn't look too hard at the starving Moscow that shifted from one foot to another and gazed goggle-eyed at our mad social whirl, we could extract a certain hilarity from our Foreign Colony existence that's impossible in less cock-eyed places than Moscow.

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## CHAPTER XI

### *RELIGION IN RUSSIA*

I HAVE never known a press photographer to pray—except in Spain! We sometimes invoke our Lucky Star, some fetish we carry about in our pockets, but as for going into a church, kneeling down and asking God to guide our camera hand so that we may photograph only things of benefit to humanity, well, we don't do much in that line.

However, when I looked through my camera to find out what the alien rulers of Russia were doing to the religion of the natives, I developed the perverse desire to get into direct communication with the God the Bolsheviks swear doesn't exist. I was therefore often surprised to find myself in one of the Moscow shrines or churches, standing beside some peasant who had failed to conform to the tenets of atheistic Communism.

Priests in Russia today are divided into two categories: those still at their posts carrying on in conformance with governmental regulation, and those in jail, in Siberian prison camps, or working as manual laborers under the GPU, which is in charge of the "forced labor" which "does not exist" in the Proletarian State.

There was once still another category, composed of priests who boldly defied the anti-religious government. But they were convicted of being "counter-revolutionary," stood up against a wall and shot or clubbed to death in underground torture rooms.

After many interviews with priests who still carry on, I emerged with photographs of but one lone priest. Nor had I persuaded them to talk freely. I didn't even have the heart to photograph them shopping in the fantastically expensive markets, which they were forced to patronize because no priest in Russia may have a food card. The one priest I did photograph appears so obviously unaware that I am sure publication of the photo in a foreign country will cause him no embarrassment.

One day I entered a little church in Moscow while a child was being baptized. The parents were young, which struck me as a bit incongruous: I knew the youth of Russia had responded considerably to the sophisticated sneers of the ruling party at any form of religious worship.

After the ceremony, I got acquainted with the priest, a left-over from the Old Régime, who spoke French. Obviously nervous and suspicious at being questioned by a foreigner, he nevertheless enjoyed being once more able to speak a language considered in the old days more cultured and sympathetic than Russian. So he loosened up and gave me some gruesome details of the religious persecution and murders which have been going on with devastating thoroughness since the Revolution. I don't know of any Moscow correspondent who has ever had a conversation, even a private one, with a priest, except when Metropolitan Sergei received the foreign press

with the permission of the Soviet authorities; on this occasion he insisted upon a questionnaire submitted in advance and probably revised by the atheist-Jewish "Red Pope."

"Will religion survive in Russia?" was the question I unofficially propounded, in as many different ways as I could devise, to my friend the priest—and his answer was always "Yes!"

"This young couple, whose baby has just been baptized—weren't they taking a chance openly going through with the ceremony I have just witnessed, knowing that there was certain to be one member of the GPU present?"

"Yes," he said, "they realized that. But"—and he spoke somewhat pathetically—"you know that religious baptism, burials and marriages are not actually forbidden by the government."

"True," I countered, "but on the other hand aren't those who take part in such ceremonies identifying themselves with a movement which can easily be considered counter-revolutionary?"

The priest hesitated before answering this question: and, though we were quite alone in the little courtyard of his church, he lowered his voice and his uncertain blue eyes said more than his words, which were:

"Yes, they do run a risk."

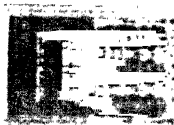
After making this statement he seemed to become more and more fidgety. I made a move to go, first asking him if I could just take the photograph of him as he stood there towering, it seemed, almost to the eaves of his little church.

This almost put him in a panic, so I didn't press the



Jew as well as Christian has had his temple defiled, his altars "liquidated". Here is a collection of sacred Jewish relics figuring among other "superstitions" in an anti-religious museum.

ВНИМАНИЕ! ВНИМАНИЕ! ВНИМАНИЕ!  
ВНИМАНИЕ! ВНИМАНИЕ! ВНИМАНИЕ!



ВНИМАНИЕ!  
ВНИМАНИЕ!  
ВНИМАНИЕ!



Fantasy, illusion, the supernatural are permitted to be suggested only in Stanislavsky's Moscow Art Theatre. Realism and materialism are the two great tenets of Bolshevik belief. This scene is from Maeterlinck's *Bluebird*.

question. But apparently to rid himself of this foreign reporter who might or might not be trustworthy, he suggested that if I wished to know about the status of the Church in Russia I might call upon the Metropolitan under whom he served God with trepidation. Reluctantly he gave me the Metropolitan's address.

The Metropolitan, whose right it would have been to crown the Czar, lived in an obscure corner of the ancient Don Monastery, on the outskirts of Moscow. When I arrived with my camera he was off in the country. His place was temporarily filled by a Metropolitan from the Ukraine, who was working for the first time in close proximity to the seat of government.

This provincial prelate naïvely welcomed the idea of an article for the outside world which would give the priesthood credit for its efforts to hold the Church together. He even suggested that I photograph the Synod in meeting, promising to ask the members to wear their robes and miters.

The regular Metropolitan, when he returned two weeks later, showed no enthusiasm for this project, which I broached after much hesitation. As if fearing that we were getting into deep water he asked if I would like to see his miter, moving toward the door as he spoke.

Removing the lid from a wooden hat-box, he unwrapped his ecclesiastical headdress. It seemed of gold studded with precious stones. I remarked that it must be of great value.

He smiled.

"It is only of pasteboard. The stones, I am afraid, are only glass. It is but an inexpensive copy of the original

miter of my office which you may have seen in the anti-religious museum across the street!"

The Metropolitan sat down beneath a framed photograph of one of his predecessors who *had* crowned a Czar.

An oil flame burned under an ikon. A very old trunk stood in the corner, the lid up, disclosing his meager personal belongings. Through the window I could see the monastery church upon which hung a sign bearing the word MUSEUM. (It was taken for granted that anti-religious museum was meant.)

The former living quarters of monks, which rimmed the high walls, were crowded with minor Soviet officials and their families. Children were playing on the stone statues of saints which had been removed from demolished churches and lay strewn over the ground.

Just inside the gate kitchen fumes rose from an open window of a restaurant for workers in the nearby Soviet pushcart factory. I lunched in that restaurant as the guest of the Director of the anti-religious museum; the large room was formerly the office of the Father Superior. The office of the Director was just above; I had photographed him sitting in the Father Superior's chair. The vegetable garden and tiny apple orchard of the monks were still cared for: they supplied the workers' restaurant.

The Metropolitan sat facing me from behind a small table, the only furniture in the room except the chairs we sat on. Nervously he fingered the massive silver chain from which was suspended an enormous medallion of the Madonna. A man of sixty, he was still a fine physical specimen. His heavy gray hair reached and covered

his broad shoulders. A long beard rested on his powerful chest. His flowing mustaches masked his mouth and his bushy eyebrows nearly met in a straight line across his broad forehead. But for the uneasy expression of his large blue eyes and the uncertain note in his deep voice, he would have presented an imposing spectacle of ecclesiastical authority. He wore a tight-fitting, dark blue velvet cassock which reached to the floor. A sash girdled his waist.

I longed to photograph him as he sat there, even if not for publication, but he refused.

He spoke for nearly an hour, yet offered nothing definite and enlightening to record. The Metropolitan did, however, permit me to quote him to the effect that "many Russians still go to church and believe in God." He did not say it defiantly; and he added:

"Religion will survive in Russia, even though not a church be left standing."

I asked him about church weddings. They did take place, he told me, but he wouldn't know when and where. He told me of a church where funeral services were conducted daily all day long. As he shut the door after I had bade him good-bye, I noticed a broken wax seal near the knob. It was the dreaded seal of the GPU and signified that at one time or other and for reasons of State, the Metropolitan had been excluded from his living quarters. The fact that he was back again indicated that he had given in, deciding that he could best serve his God and people by accepting, without outward protest, the inevitable, hoping, as my friend the baptizing priest put it, for "better times."

Next day I visited the church of funerals. It was crowded. Four bodies lay exposed in their shallow, paper-covered coffins. A group of relatives and friends clustered about each body, holding lighted candles and continually praying and crossing themselves.

The service at the grave was very haphazard, the gravediggers, for instance, smoking as they lowered the body into the ground. The priest officiating at this funeral chapel and in the graveyard worked too long for the good of the ceremony.

They intone the service so rapidly, because of being pressed for time, that it lacks impressiveness; yet the group of mourners was obviously affected. It was difficult to decide whether they were envious of the corpse, sorry at being left in Russia or afraid the deceased had gone to a world with crueler punishment, even, than that meted out by the Bolsheviks. The service is in Russian, rather than Latin or Greek, but even had I known more Russian I could not have picked up any of the rapidly spoken words.

A priest chanted the service for the dead, swinging his censer over first one and then another of the corpses. As he concluded his blessing, the coffin was closed and four gravediggers carried it out cradled in straps swung over their shoulders.

At the grave another priest performed the last rites as one more person who did not fit into a new civilization made his escape from Russia.

I heard the priests' side of the religious question in Russia. Now I must interview Comrade Smirdovitch,



the "Red Pope," Soviet Director of Anti-Religious Activities and dictator over the Russian Church.

As I stood before him, my camera slung over my shoulder, Soviet Russia's Jewish Antichrist regarded me with genial suspicion. He had received me as a photographer, but when I had finished taking photographs of him I asked a question.

Interviews to foreigners are given by Soviet officials only in rare instances and then a written list of questions is submitted in advance. So Comrade Smirdovitch, important member of the all-powerful Central Executive Committee, son of a rabbi and Field Marshal of the Bolshevik forces waging war against religion, asked *me* a few questions before answering mine.

Leaning forward on his desk, fixing his alert eyes on me, he interrogated me in excellent French.

"Are you a Catholic?" he began.

"No, monsieur."

"You are Protestant, then?"

"No, monsieur."

"You do not look like a Mohammedan and you are not a Communist. What are you?"

"Monsieur, I am a photographer."

Greatly relieved, he turned towards the gentleman seated in a corner and smilingly translated my frank admission into Russian. The gentleman in the corner, obviously a member of the GPU, appeared much less indulgent than Smirdovitch. For one thing, he did not understand French and was obviously peeved that we should converse in the court language of the Old Régime.

During the photographing, Comrade Smirdovitch had told me he learned his French as a student in Paris; I

could see that he enjoyed speaking it. He did not look the part of the Bolshevik Mephistopheles I had pictured him in advance. A man of sixty or more, cultured, courteous and above all a humorist, his well-shaped head is hornless. I had no opportunity to observe him from the rear but I do not believe he had a tail.

In all his life, he had never had such an opportunity to indulge his sense of humor as when, an atheist, he became custodian of religion in Russia. No man, Jew or Gentile, has ever exercised such anti-religious authority or been backed up by such a powerful combination as the Soviet Government and the Communist Party.

Having satisfied himself that I was not a professional interviewer disguised as a photographer, Comrade Smirdovitch occupied himself with my question, which was:

“What percentage of the pre-revolutionary churches of Russia have been demolished or closed to religious worship?”

He consulted the GPU in the corner and they agreed that fifty per cent of the Moscow churches still held services. Moscow's churches had numbered sixteen hundred

“What about outside the cities?”

“There more of them function. Probably sixty per cent.”

“Do you consider that after fifteen years of persecu-

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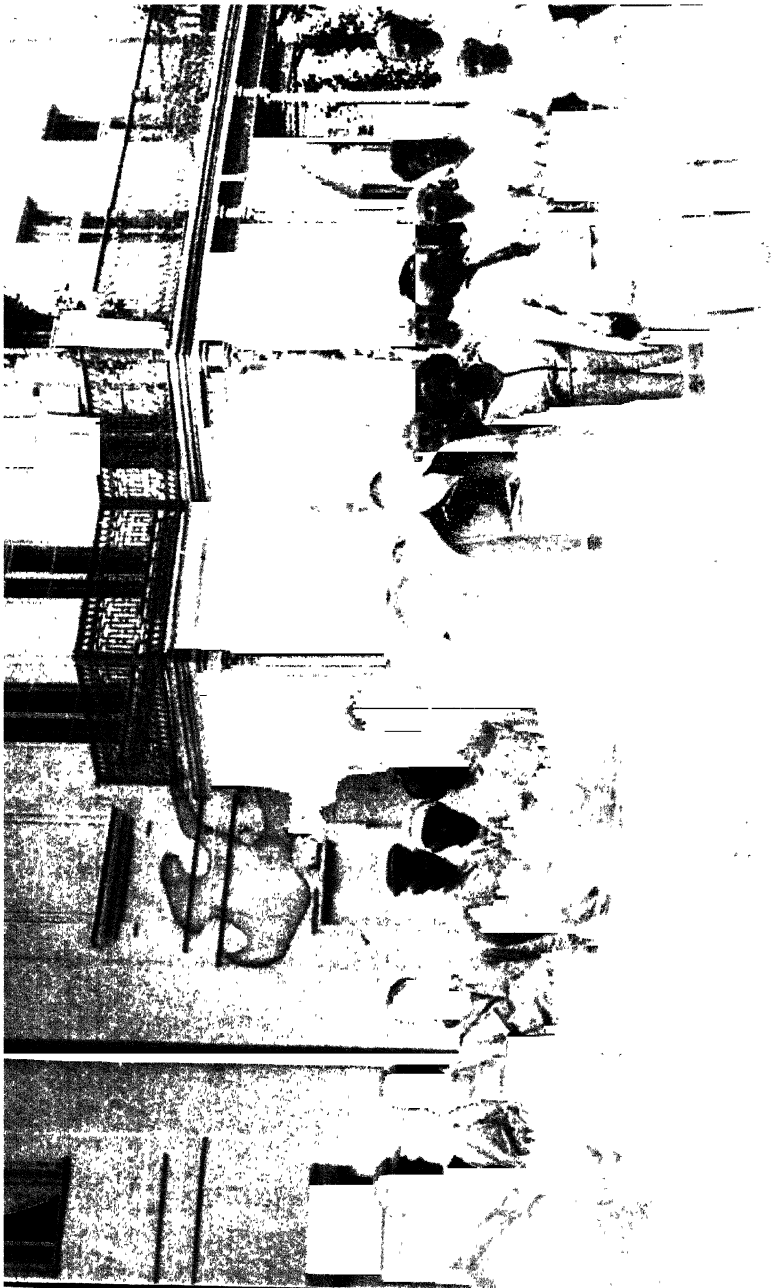
In contrast to capitalistic notions of amusement, the scene pictured here is not offered on the stage to a charmed public but rather back stage to a delighted photographer.

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ФІМА

ВІДМЕЩАНИИ  
ПАРТІЯС. !!  
ДАРБИТІМ ВЕЛІ.  
КУРСО-  
ПОС'ЯН С  
Віра !!





Old soldiers never die . . . they retire, if ex-prisoners of pre-revolutionary days, to a luxurious home. These are not all Communists, but veterans who dreamed, struggled, plotted and threw bombs in Czarist days.

tion the closing of an average of forty-five per cent indicates a successful anti-religious campaign?"

Comrade Smirdovitch objected to the word persecution.

"We have need of church edifices for cultural and educational purposes," he explained. "If the churches can survive without State aid, if they can pay their taxes, if, in short, religion can justify its existence, it will continue. We discourage religion but we do not resort to persecution."

For a while we talked of Paris. Then I asked if he thought religion would survive in the USSR.

"No," he replied without hesitation. "Under proletarian dictatorship, each succeeding generation will free itself further from superstition. Science will eventually displace religion."

Thinking of the baptism I had witnessed a few days before and the contention of the Bolsheviki that youth in Russia already has been weaned from the Church, I asked Smirdovitch if infant baptism was against the government regulations imposed upon the activities of the Church.

"Not at all," he replied. "The education infants receive in Soviet schools will more than offset the baptism. The regulations regarding religious activities are very simple. First, priests must not engage in counter-revolutionary work, which of course applies to everyone in the Soviet Union. Second, there shall be no religious schools, no religious instruction of those under eighteen years of age. Third, the churches must pay their taxes."

I should have liked to question Comrade Smirdovitch about just how "counter-revolutionary work" would be

defined. I also thought of the response of the baptizing priest when I had inquired whether he thought that the government's anti-religious propaganda amongst Russian youth would effectively kill their religion.

"We do not know yet," he had said sadly. "We can only hope."

It might occur to the reader outside Russia that with the indisputable facilities which the Soviet authorities possess, they show marked tolerance in not having long since closed every church in the Union. But tolerance does not enter into the situation. Despite the grandiose plans to make the USSR self-sustaining and independent of capitalistic peoples, the Bolsheviki still need financial machinery and technical aid from abroad. So they content themselves with restricting the influence of the Church, an unrelenting campaign against religion, and above all anti-religious education of the youth.

While there is no denying the preponderance of older persons at church services, youth nevertheless is in evidence. I asked Smirdovitch how he accounted for this.

"Curiosity!" he said. "And the natural love of the Russian for the theatrical. Religion in Russia was never deeper than the people's enjoyment of theatrical display. The peasant was the most devout religious observer and he was never sincerely devout."

I asked how one measures the sincerity of religious devotion.

"By the practice of his religion outside the church," he replied. "The peasant's chief motive was to be absolved from the sins he had committed, was committing and intended to commit. The priesthood fattened on the peasant's willingness to pay for forgiveness."



I risked one more question: where would the new generations of priests be recruited and educated?

Comrade Smirdovitch shrugged his shoulders.

"You must ask some Metropolitan of the Church that question," he replied.

"Would Monsieur be so good as to give me a letter of introduction to a Metropolitan?" I asked.

Smirdovitch laughed outright:

"I am afraid a letter of introduction from me would not help you much. It might be construed as an order."

From which I gathered that he did sometimes issue these orders.

As I was leaving, though I could not detect the slightest trace of a smile on his face, he said:

"It's a pity when you talked with Stalin you did not ask him where the new priests would come from. You know Stalin was educated in a religious institution!"

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## CHAPTER XII

### *BACKSTAGE IN MOSCOW*

EVERY time I stepped out of the overcharged political atmosphere of Moscow's streets and into the stage door of a theater, it felt like stepping off shoddy Broadway on a hot day into an air-conditioned cinema house. Not that the theaters of Moscow are air-cooled; they haven't got around to that yet. But because inside the theaters was surcease from Proletarianism. The fold could be considered toilers; if so, they're the aristocrats of toil.

The Bolsheviks have superimposed propaganda on their theater until it has become top-heavy with political messages. But the actors and actresses have kept right on being actors and actresses and "builders of Socialism" whenever they get around to it, if at all. And Lunacharsky was, in a great measure, responsible for this. Americans recognized the Russian Theater long before the USA recognized the USSR.

Lunacharsky was in the Old Régime an intellectual revolutionist, a university professor who was not sufficiently hard-boiled when the Revolution had been realized to adjust himself to the brutalities which the Bolsheviks consider necessary to consolidate the Revolu-

tion. He showed great courage in the early days of the Revolution in fighting for the control of the mobs who were out to destroy evidences of the Old Régime, regardless of whether the evidences were works of art or not. It is due to Lunacharsky that many of the more beautiful churches weren't razed or torches applied, that palaces of former nobility did not meet a similar fate. Lunacharsky saved the art of Russia, at least temporarily, because today only art which has intrinsic value receives any consideration. The Chinese Wall, for instance, in Moscow, which is today being torn down; a little chapel directly in front of the great cathedral that was blown up was a work of art that should have been preserved through the centuries to come. As a matter of fact, Stalin is reported to have promised George Bernard Shaw that nothing would ever happen to that little masterpiece; yet it was demolished to make room for the Soviet palace which may never be built.

I have visited him in his apartment in Moscow, a place it would never have done for the proletariat to view. Madame Lunacharsky, whose love of luxury had frequently caused her husband a great deal of embarrassment, had made her dwelling a thing of rare beauty with fine paintings, miniatures, period furniture arranged too well for proletarian comfort. Her exclusive receptions, several of which I attended, were what one would expect in Berlin or Paris of the wife of some high government official of good taste. Members of foreign embassies, artists of stage and cinema, writers and authors were there; there was nothing perverse about them except they were chic and elegant in a land where elegance

is only furtively admired. Madame Lunacharsky was an actress—not a very good one, but she had good taste.

I never saw Lunacharsky again after I photographed Stalin. He died recently, a disillusioned man regarding the realization of a proletarian Utopia.

Having received Lunacharsky's sanction, I had run the gauntlet of officials in the State Bureau of Theaters and finally got to Stanislavsky's private secretary, who fortunately for me spoke English. Better still, she had a flair for Americans and when I hauled out a letter of introduction from Morris Gest we became almost kindred spirits.

When I told her what I wanted to do in that Temple of Art, she said:

"You'll get along all right with the Russians, because you're as crazy as we are. Crazier!"

And I had merely asked:

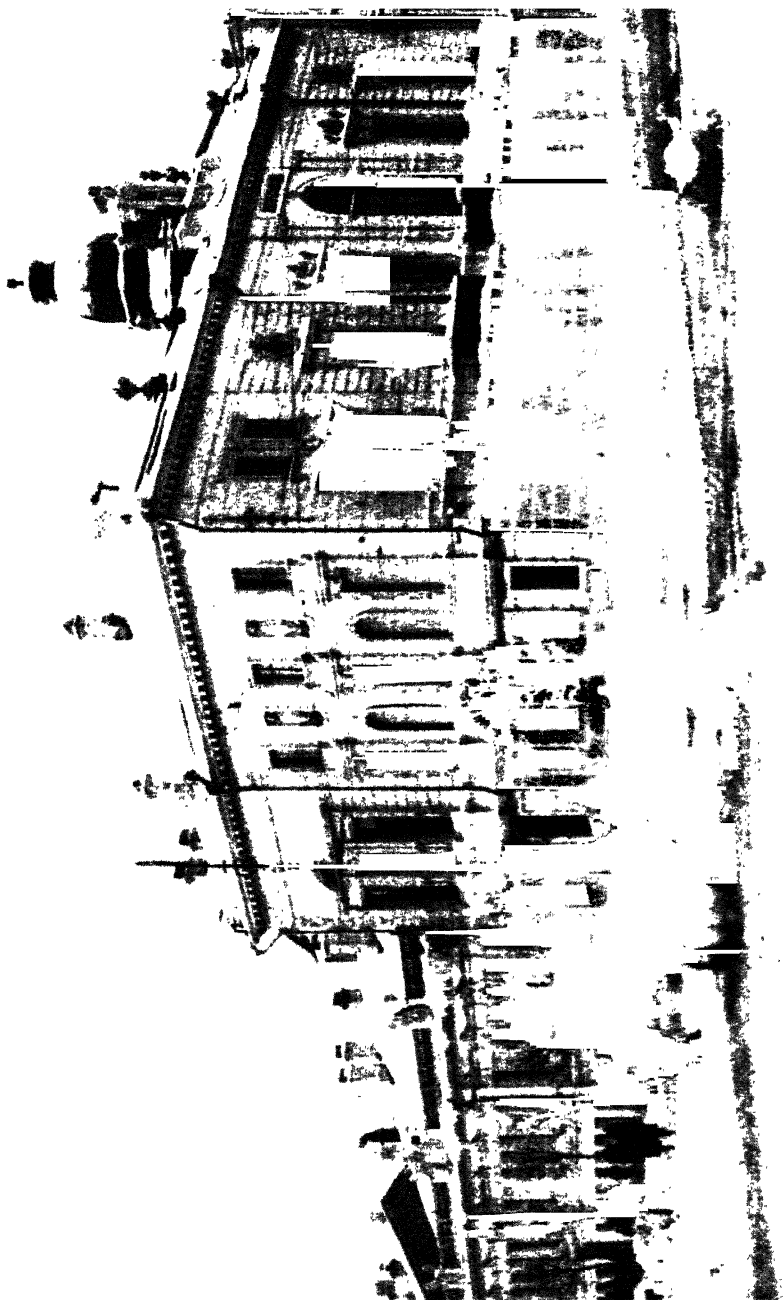
"Who are the stars of this troupe? Are they beautiful? Which one has the best pair of legs?"

All perfectly natural questions from a photographer brought up on Broadway with several years of subsequent backstage experience in Paris, London, Berlin, Vienna and Budapest.

However, it seemed that the Soviets regard this viewpoint as bourgeois. Sex is never exploited in the Russian theaters; only after I had hammered away at them incessantly, did they give in and allow me to shoot what I wanted.

Although I seemed to convince them that beauty was as vital as dramatic talent, I recognized something in

A famous cabaret in Moscow, now a peasant home. It is always crowded to capacity, this Beau Geste of the Soviets to the peasants who have toed the Red line. (No others are admitted.)





If his horse wins and if he can collect his winnings, your Soviet racing fan may indulge in the national dream of pleasure; the bourgeois luxury of stuffing himself full of food.



their viewpoint too. In Russia, it is never possible for a beautiful girl of sixteen or seventeen to rise overnight to the heights of stardom merely because she is lovely to look upon. She rises, if at all, through sheer acting ability, which she may prove and develop in the many excellent training schools for prospective Thespians.

The training school for actresses is a part of the Moscow Art Theater and in a separate theater from the Art Theater itself. It is under the supervision of Donachenko who has visited America since the Revolution. The young students of acting and stagecraft are selected from thousands all over the Soviet Union and are not, even when they themselves perform in plays, considered as artists. A large percentage of those who are admitted to the school for training never graduate on to the boards of the first-class theaters. Even Bolshevism does not stifle the dramatic art in Russia. I witnessed a performance of *The Two Orphans* which in America would have been considered a good performance, but which was treated with polite toleration by the audience.

In the school, however, there was much youth and beauty you could not find in the really first-string theaters. The strain of achieving Stardom in Russia takes so long that many of the finished actresses who play roles of youth must depend more upon their art than upon their youth.

There was also a training school in connection with the Meyerhold Theater built on similar lines as the Moscow Art Theater, but Meyerhold's scheme of theatrical production, more experimental than Stanislavsky's, possesses less of the sacred regard for theatrical traditions.

One night in that funny old red brick theater on Pe-

trovsky Pereoulak (I've really forgotten its name), I photographed artistes whose ideology was as cockeyed as mine. It was a visiting Tartar troupe playing in its native tongue; the play itself was a holdover from Czarist days, one which hadn't been properly ironed out for Socialism. The Moscow Tartar-speaking audience was composed of good Bolsheviks and they started a riot in the last act; things looked serious until the GPU stopped the show, rang down the curtain and gave the performers a lecture in the wings. It was a jumpy troupe I finally lined up to photograph; I felt for them because I knew how difficult it was to differentiate between the right and wrong in a revolutionary atmosphere.

A prime pleasure denied the rising young Soviet stage queen is that soul-satisfying queue of stagedoor Johnnies. Not only beauty of figure but the love theme itself is most rigidly excluded from the Russian stage, the emphasis being placed upon the emotions and the mind rather than the legs.

Other diversions incidental to an American theatrical career are absent from the lives of the Russian actor and actresses. There is, for instance, no chance of experiencing the thrill of seeing your name headlined in a nice, spicy divorce action—for the simple reason that in Russia there is no scandal about getting divorced. Divorce costs two roubles and is obtainable on the request of either one of the contracting parties—which releases for the "building of Socialism" a lot of high-gearred legal brains which might otherwise have been dedicated to the demolishing of marriage contracts.

Nor is it possible for the Soviet stage idol to step majestically from the stagedoor into his or her luxurious

automobile to be whirled off triumphantly to the open-mouthed amazement of the onlooking yokels. The Soviet stage artist is officially entitled to buy an automobile and often makes enough to be able to afford such a luxury. The only drawback being the fact that there are positively no automobiles for sale to private individuals in Russia today.

Playwrights and authors, however, are more fortunate in this respect. They are allowed royalties on the foreign rights of their works, payable in foreign money, so they can import foreign cars. Boris Pilnyak is the proud owner of one of Russia's few private automobiles, a gleaming machine of bourgeois make, bought with bourgeois *valuta*.

I'm afraid, too, that the American *matinée* idol would shudder at the absolute lack of publicity and publicity agents in the Russian theater. There is plenty of acclaim there for the actor or actress who gives a fine performance and shows definite talent—a sincere and natural acclaim which, to the Soviet way of thinking, is more real and valuable than fame artificially built up. Thus the Russian public is utterly indifferent to what their stage stars' home lives, tastes in food and individual preference in clothes, poodles and love-nest sharers may be. The Soviet Thespian's view on such matters as facial creams, yeast as a complexion builder or the future of the League of Nations receives no attention from the Soviet press. The only publicity agent in all Russia is not of the theater but is employed by the Moscow race-track. And even he forbears to hand out awed descriptions of the nosebag contents and off-track habits of his equine charges.

Perhaps, viewing all this, you might decide that the lot of the Russian stage star is devoid of glamour. Not so. For one thing, there is nothing quite so satisfying to the vanity of the artist the world over as a full house. The lucky Russian actor is guaranteed a complete audience at every performance, for their theaters are always filled to a seat. All Russians attend the theater if they live within a hundred versts of one. The seats are always filled because they are surprisingly inexpensive and because the poor worker who cannot afford to pay has only to go to his factory superintendent, explain his financial status and walk away with free seats!

An instance of the adulation of the public for theatrical figures, perhaps the only stagedoor demonstration I witnessed in Russia, occurred as I stood in the snow outside the Moscow Art Theater waiting to photograph Maestro Producer Stanislavsky, as much of a hero to the Bolshevik proletariat as he was to Czarist theatergoers.

The privileges of a recognized artist of the Russian theater can be estimated by an incident which involved Joseph Stalin, Stanislavsky and a hard-boiled overzealous Soviet official who had been delegated to do a little overseeing in the Moscow Art Theater. The official in question attempted, among other reforms, to make the Moscow Art Theater safe for Proletarianism by reducing the living quarters of the Maestro himself. The producer of two régimes reached for a telephone, called the Kremlin, demanded direct communication with Stalin—and got it! Within two hours the Soviet bureaucrat was out of a job.

Beside this almost paradoxical worship of the artist in a land of presumably practical-minded people, Soviet

artists receive more pay, more food, better living quarters, better-looking husbands and wives than fall to the lot of any other category except the highest government or Party officials and the members of the GPU. Nor are they even denied the bourgeois luxury of personal maids and valets.

Yet it might have given the American parlor Bolshevik a shock to see the proletarian King of Denmark, as I saw him, getting ready to strut across the boards in the Soviet version of *Hamlet* with the assistance of a real honest-to-capitalism valet who waited on the stage king hand and foot in his spacious and comfortable backstage dressing room. Essaying the rôle of prognosticator, the writer predicts that Red *Hamlet* will prove the chief magnet for theater-loving Americans this summer.

The Bolsheviks have finally discovered what Shakespeare had in mind when he wrote *Hamlet*: the Bard of Avon was subtly poking fun at royalty and pulling the leg of the bourgeoisie! This new version of *Hamlet* is the greatest theatrical success in Russia since the Revolution. So skillfully staged, rearranged, so sumptuously presented and so expertly played that the most devout worshiper of Shakespeare cannot help being impressed, even if shocked by the liberties taken with the traditional interpretation.

Hamlet's madness is definitely established as being affected; he is nothing more than a scheming opportunist. Ophelia was a loose woman who drowned while very drunk. The King of Denmark was a fidgety, weak-kneed, henpecked monarch. The famous soliloquy was actually spoken during a dialogue between Hamlet and a gravedigger. "To be or not to be," in Moscow, Hamlet said

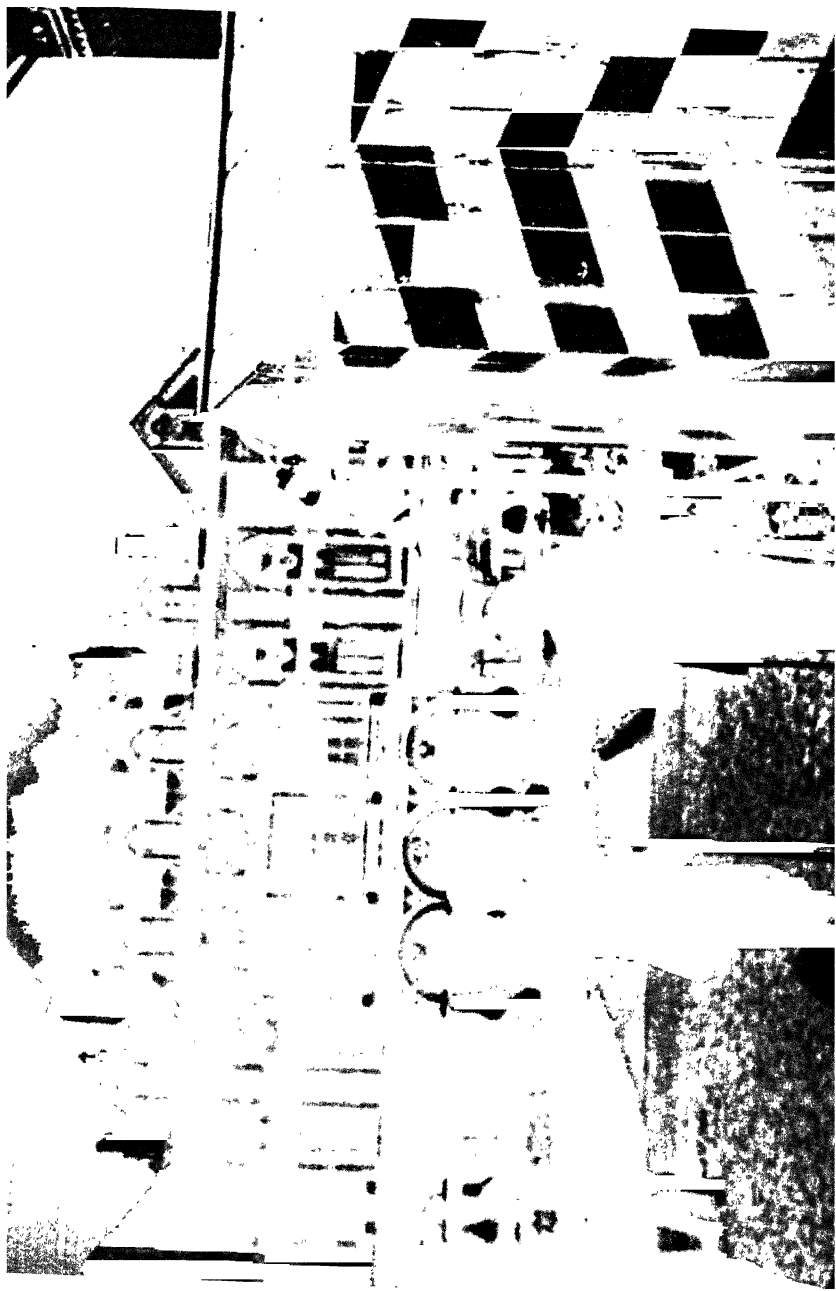
as he tossed a coin to decide whether or not it was worth the effort to be or not to be a king.

There is a one-man audience in the Russian theater who receives more player-interest than all the other audiences put together; or, if he doesn't, he should. Only once, during many years spent backstage in the world's theaters, did I have the impulse to become a ballet dancer—and solely because a ballet dancer in the Bolshoya Theater enjoys a privilege accorded to only about fifty persons out of a hundred and sixty million Soviet inhabitants. To wit—frequent, close-up, and revealing views of Joseph Stalin! The other eight members of the *Polit-Bureau* who help Stalin rule that vast land see less of the Great Dictator than do the ballet members of the National Opera House.

Stalin sits there in his Kremlin office, smoking his pipe and mapping out the destiny of the world's greatest show—imperturbable and unapproachable. He is like a city editor who, when you start to say "Good morning," says: "Write it!" before you start to speak. But as I sat in the front row of the Opera, I realized that those ballet dancers know a lot more of the human side of Stalin than I had stumbled over.

Yes, the ballet is Stalin's one hobby. He attends rehearsals not as dictator, but merely as student, observer, spectator. Then, throughout the performance, night after night, he sits in his box, visible only to those on the stage. And he watches: rapt, intent, almost fascinated, if such a personage may be fascinated.

FORBIDDEN. Another daring photograph:  
it's military and it discloses a sentry-box!  
Formerly a pleasure palace of Catherine the  
Great, next a kind of harem for Czarist  
officials, the building in the background now  
houses the Academy of Military Aviation.







A company of Red aviators, Russia's crack troops, on parade in front of headquarters building. The second story room on the corner was Napoleon's bed-chamber when he visited Moscow in 1812.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### *RED ARISTOCRACY*

THAT night the street before the Spiridonovka—formerly the place of a Czarist merchant prince but now used solely as an entertainment center and free hotel for foreigners who have worked for or spoken well of The Cause—was filled with sleek bourgeois limousines and sleeker, even more bourgeois-looking guests. Beyond the street stood a motley sector of Moscow's rabble, staring enviously at the favored guests, barred from the block by smartly uniformed GPU. On ordinary occasions the masses are permitted to peer through the grilled iron barrier which surrounds the Spiridonovka; but not that night. They might get a glimpse of evening gowns and high hats, limousines and costly jewelry, thus getting in their lowly skulls a wrong idea concerning the swankier side of "building Socialism."

Inside the vestibule one's wraps were taken caressingly from one's shoulders by the cloakroom attendant, who addressed one in the language of one's country. One received nothing so vulgar as a check for one's wraps: the flunkies, holdovers from the Old Régime, possess that natural inborn faculty of remembering every coat, scarf, silk hat and cane entrusted to their care.

The interior of the Spiridonovka is furnished in much the same overlavish manner as an old-time Class A house of ill fame: just one more chandelier, one more divan, one more inch of thickness in the rich Oriental rugs than is necessary to good taste. Beyond the vestibule I saw a grandiose stairway at the foot of which, in addition to the usual bronze nymphs supporting torchlike lamps, were two of the finest specimens of GPU manhood available standing fixed and frozen as the bronze nymphs.

It is the custom to ascend the thickly carpeted stairway to be greeted at the top by smiling, almost unctuous Foreign Office officials, in full dress with tails: the Reception Committee! The same old Foreign Office officials who daily bargain over the desks of their rickety old building that the world may get a good impression of the process of "building Socialism."

At the head of the line was the guiding genius of the occasion, Madame Litvinov herself; as the diplomat in front of me bent over her outstretched hand, I thought that here was a woman who was at home in any atmosphere, whether greeting her foreign guests in evening gown or discussing the "big problems" in her nightie on my *datcha* porch. Later, at the London Economic Conference, I saw her as the tight-lipped, efficient secretary-wife of her brilliant husband. Where other diplomats' wives were just diplomats' wives, Madame Litvinov is a diplomat in her own right and as good as any of them. In her private life she is not the least bit high-hat. She lives with her two charming children in a flat over the Spiridonovka garage with a bed and working desk awaiting her traveling salesman husband, the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, when he's home from his job of compromising the farmers' daughters of Capitalism. Madame

Litvinov complains bitterly of "class distinctions" in Soviet Russia. When the children of Commissars and high officials attend the public school and mingle with the offspring of the lower classes they encounter the same sort of awe, on the part of their humbler classmates, as would be the lot of dukes' and earls' offspring in a British board school. Soviet parents, as well as their children, are becoming more fashionable than most would like to admit. In Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov and other great Russian cities, a new aristocracy is fast springing up, rapidly adopting formerly despised superficial trappings of capitalist countries.

There is hand-kissing in the lobbies of Soviet theaters today. Many times during my eight months' stay in Russia I observed this phenomenon. Proletarians as well as bourgeois visitors indulge and are not censured for falling by the wayside.

At the Opera one sees a sprinkling of evening gowns, which look as though they might have been brought in from capitalistic countries and traded in for carefully hoarded roubles. The Moscow racetrack is nearly as snobbish in atmosphere and the smart appearance of the crowds as are the fashionable racetracks of countries which admit that racing is the sport of kings.

Even Joseph Stalin has his troubles with his children. Yasha, his oldest, has been sent to the Caucasus to study electrical engineering because he was rapidly turning out to be no good: jazz parties . . . drinking bouts . . . pretty women. He disappointed his self-made father by secretly eloping with a ballerina of whom the Red dictator disapproved.

Plenty of high Bolshevik officials and Party officers

live in swanky Kremlin apartments while the masses must be content with being huddled together, sometimes several families to a room.

The capitalist masses own automobiles; in Russia only the mass aristocrats or the artists drawing *valuta* royalties can afford to. As for the lordly Intourist chauffeurs, they are perfectly open in their disdain for the common pedestrian; a British engineer informed me that within five days he himself had seen five pedestrians killed by automobiles in the Moscow streets.

During my 1927 visit it was decidedly *au fait* to look as roughly dressed and proletarian as possible; five years later I found that the Russians were well on the way to dressing as well as possible. In 1934 I witnessed the first Soviet Fashion Show, held in Moscow and attended by the élite of Bolshevism who turned up their proletarian noses at the cheap costumes on exhibition.

Incidentally Red Russia's beauty parlors are now doing a tremendous business: and the Soviet Cosmetic Trust is one of the most prosperous in the Union.

One of the most socially prominent groups in Soviet Russia is the Society of Old Bolsheviks. Its members were Bolsheviks before the Revolution, which puts them a step ahead of most of the social competition in the USSR.

Even more exclusive than the Old Bolsheviks, however, is the Society for Ex-Political Prisoners which admits only those who served at least six years in capitalistic prisons. Again, Joseph Stalin heads its membership.

The Society of Ex-Political Prisoners is a self-

supporting unit controlling twenty-three factories and workshops which afford economic security to the three thousand members and their families. Members who have no way of making a living are quartered free of charge in the town house with free trips to the country mansion in the summer, free food and free medical care in their own private hospital. The factories and workshops which support the Society make a decent profit devoted to the improvement of their properties and the education in Bolshevik principles of the children and grandchildren of the aristocratic members. Only about forty per cent of the ex-political prisoners are members of the Communist Party.

I made a tour of the Moscow home for ex-bomb-throwers and of their country mansion.

The executive offices of the Society are located in the Moscow home and bustle with busy, prosperous-looking clerks. The ex-bomb-throwers live in the atmosphere of an aristocratic club of bygone days, with a private restaurant and picture gallery containing photographs, drawings, paintings and etchings—many of them works of art—that depict the less pleasant side of prison life under the Czars. Men and women stretched out on the rack . . . beaten by thongs . . . suspended by their heels . . . and one really beautifully done portrait of a group of revolutionaries hanging from a forest of scaffolds in a great walled courtyard surrounded by interested soldiers ankle-deep in snow. There is an enlarged snapshot of a group of Siberian prison camp inmates. Joseph Stalin, with a record for the greatest number of escapes, is prominently displayed.

In another room I saw a number of aged revolutionists

placidly playing chess beneath a wall exhibit of relics of Czarist leather whips and thongs which had once been applied to the backs of agitators, historic handcuffs that once clasped now-famous hands and various other third-degree implements now used on those who do not conform to the New Régime.

After lunching with the ex-bomb-throwers in their town restaurant, I motored out through vast fields of nodding sunflowers to their country home, located about twenty miles from Moscow. The mansion and estate in Czarist days belonged to the noble Sheremetiev family, long since "liquidated" in one manner or another. Our automobile passed through the picturesque old wooden gates of the estate and ascended the long gravel driveway to the manor, shaded with tall trees.

A sweet little old lady, a lace cap on her snowy-white bunched hair, sat on a balcony of the ancient country mansion. As our car came to a stop in the driveway below she gazed placidly down at us, then continued her embroidery.

My guide took me on a tour of the grounds.

Pine trees on either side of the rambling old mansion exude their spicy fragrance. Only a few trees shade the front of the house, without shutting off the balcony view of the rolling countryside. A spacious, closely cropped lawn, once the playground of nobility, slopes away from the front of the manor.

Stone-flagged walks lead down to clear artificial lakes in the pine and white birch forest. Beside the lake and interspersed about the estate are rustic wooden benches and shaded sunhouses. Behind the roomy barns are the quarters once occupied by the Sheremetiev stable-boys,



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The ballroom where Catherine the Great revelled with her lovers is now the Social Hall of the Academy of Military Aviation. A pleasant place to relax in after a day's intensive study of Liberty motors.

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No musical comedy soldier, this, but Comrade Major Sumarakova, the only military aviatrix in the Red Army and commandant of an experimental station which includes a battalion of male pilots. She's marvelous!

now reconstructed and fitted up for a children's crèche. Here, two hundred yards into the forest, the children and grandchildren of members live and play in the summer. An attractive log cabin for the children alone had once been a henhouse. A resident physician guards the health of the children.

The tiny houses which once were the dwellings of the peasants who tilled the Sheremetiev farms are still occupied by peasants . . . who now work for the Society for Ex-Political Prisoners.

Roses, syringa, cyclamen, lilac make the carefully cultivated gardens bright spots in the soft green lawns, cared for by the same gardener who once served the Sheremetievs and who retains the same room in the servants' quarters which he has had forty-five years. When I asked the old gardener what he has found to take the place of religion, he answered simply:

"Flowers."

I photographed him with a guest bomb-thrower from France, a nice little old man with snow-white hair who had taken an active part in the Paris Commune and who proudly showed me a photostatic copy of his prison record in France. Once he stood in a row of criminals, was shot but not killed and finally made his escape only to be brought back to serve a term in a French prison. Now he spends much of his time perusing the French classics in the library.

Inside the mansion, everything is the way it must have been during the Sheremetiev occupancy: the present occupants have preserved the Old Régime atmosphere of culture. The old Sheremetiev music room, with its elegant furnishings and imported concert grand piano,

is spacious and dignified. A classical atmosphere is preserved in the huge old library, with dark paneled walls lined with fine old hand-tooled editions of French and English masterpieces.

Wide staircases covered with soft carpetings lead to the second floor where the great square bedrooms are preserved as of yore. Sandwiched in between the old canopied poster-beds are narrow iron cots for the overflow of ex-revolutionaries on summer vacation. Huge white tile stoves with deep blue decorations tower to the ceilings of the bedrooms. There are few fireplaces in Russia.

As we were inspecting one of these bedrooms the resonant tones of a musical gong sounded imperiously from below. At the invitation of my courteous guide I descended to a high-ceilinged, exquisitely paneled breakfast room with latticed windows opening out from a huge window-seat. Dinner is served.

The aristocrats of Revolution were seated about the round mahogany table. As I took my place at this proletarian Round Table I observed that the Bolshevik knights and ladies were being served by peasant retainers on china which bore the coat-of-arms of the Society of Ex-Political Prisoners: a barred prison window and a chained manacle wreath!

I sat between the Director of the Home and a gray-bearded old gentleman, Vasily Perovsky, brother of the Sofia Perovsky who, with six others, was hanged for the assassination of Czar Alexander II. As we dined on the rich viands I noted with disappointment that my white-haired old lady with the lace cap was not there.

But across the table from me was a giant of a man

with a long white beard, a fine shock of snow-white hair and eyes that looked right through one. The essence of dignity, he was Mikhail Frolenko, a fellow conspirator with the Perovskys in the assassination of Czar Alexander II; he had spent twenty-four years in Czarist prisons. Later in the afternoon I watched his aged but still nimble fingers shift knights, bishops, queens, pawns about a chessboard while he told a group of young Communists how he had plotted the assassination. Sitting next to Frolenko was Elizabeth Kovaleskaya, daughter of a Ukrainian landlord and his serf. Looking at her, it was hard to believe that she had spent twenty years in prison for terroristic activities. Throughout dinner the little group chatted, laughed, joked and recounted soft-spoken tales of bloodshed and terror in the old days of the Revolution.

After dinner I wandered about the grounds again; and, returning, again observed the white-haired old lady nodding over her embroidery on the balcony. I decided to conclude my visit with an interview with her, whoever she might be.

She was Vera Figner, once one of the most famous and feared of all revolutionaries! Her widely circulated autobiography is a classic in revolutionary literature. Although over eighty, her delicate face and figure are still beautiful after a life of bitter hardships. Her slender transparent hands offer no suggestion of the uses to which they had been put, year after year, decade after decade, in her younger days.

They had, among other things, pounded the faces of brawny prison guards, fondled bombs and lovers alike, doubled into fists to be shaken at cruel soldiers of the

Czar. That tiny right hand had clutched a dagger used against police sent to arrest her; this sweet little old lady had, with dramatic eloquence, swayed crowds of oppressed people, and for twenty years she had made her own bed, done her own washing and clung to prison bars in solitary confinement as a dangerous radical.

Here on the balcony where Old Régime nobles had sunned themselves while it lasted, Vera Figner reminisced verbally with me. She spoke English, which she had taught herself from books by ways of passing the time in the grim old prison fortresses of Peter and Paul, and Schlüsselburg. Her eyes and voice were so gentle, her manner so subdued, that I simply could not resist laughing aloud at the incongruous picture this one-time terrorist made as she conversed with me.

The conversation veered to the present Soviet system. As Vera Figner discussed the government she had devoted her life to establishing, her comment came softly and her eyes were dull with tragedy. Her words caused me to glance sharply over my shoulder for fear she might be over-heard.

"This is not what we fought for," she murmured.

The Riviera sunshine of a summer's day in Moscow shone luxuriously upon the pre-revolutionary racetrack. Under the great tribune roof it was cool and gay: the coolest and gayest place in the USSR. White-aproned waiters hurried about serving beer, tea, apéritifs or whatever the élite gathering fancied, and smilingly pocketed generous tips for their service. I have seen GPU officials give tips to waiters and these were gratefully received;



I have seen Soviet officials do the same, but, by and large, the Soviet citizenry does not tip.

Horse-racing is justified in Russia on the basis that it stimulates interest in one phase of betterment in the live stock which is still used in commercial, industrial and above all military ways. They have pari-mutuel betting but if you lay a bet on a 10-1 shot, something seems to go wrong, for I could discover no one who had ever got better than 2-1 in the pay-off.

In the Royal Box, where formerly sat the Czars of All the Russias and their blue-blooded guests, there was, strange as it may seem, royalty: an Assyrian Prince sitting nobly in the midst of pop-eyed high proletarian officials, his bronzed face framed in the billowing folds of his white burnoose. By his side was his bodyguard, a giant Negro, also in a white flowing burnoose, but without the markings of caste which his master displayed. The Soviet officials lost in awe at the dignity of this Eastern potentate, were clad simply in tunic blouses, riding breeches and sleek leather riding boots. Outside the Royal Box a cinema operator cranked his camera to record the first visit of royalty to the Sovietized Moscow racetrack.

I sat between the press agent of the racetrack and the Director of the Soviet Horse Trust, M. Huskin. USSR's only press agent seemed to delight in speaking French, a bourgeois language which stamped him as a hold-over from the Old Régime.

The well-fed Russian jockeys were heavier than those of other countries, both in the saddle and in sulkies; Director Huskin told me that they even have two feminine

jockeys, one of the daughter of Meyerhold, the theatrical impresario.

It was a pretty sight. Well-groomed dirt track . . . gleaming, burnished bodies which responded to the natural urge of all living species to move faster, with more grace, than others . . . well-filled grandstand studded with boxes . . . a smart-looking restaurant . . . betting booths . . . and vibrating, roughneck Moscow always in the offing, basking in the glorious summer sun. The Director himself showed signs of a strain of blue blood. Dressed in a smart, well-tailored riding costume with polished boots, he had bearing, dignity, class, written all over him.

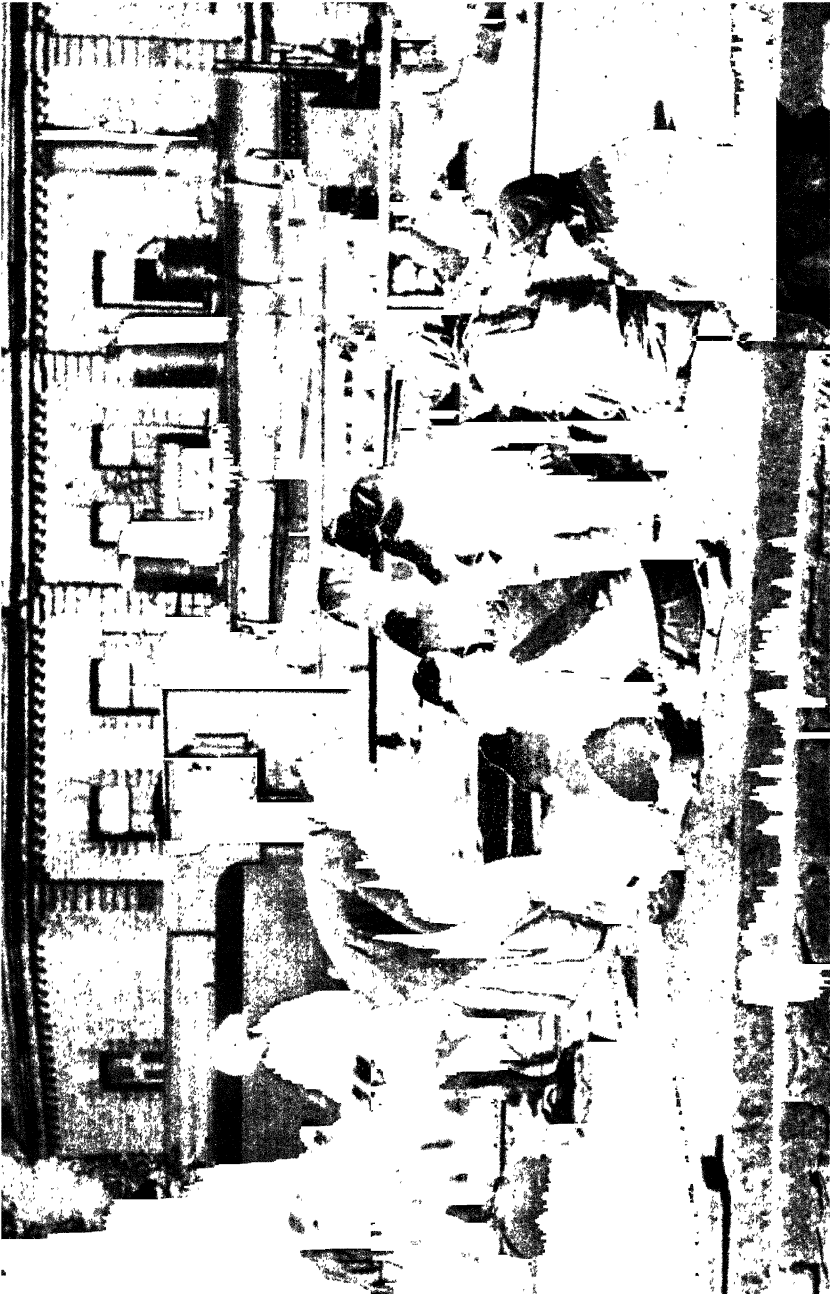
"Do you have horse-racing in other cities in Russia?" I asked him.

"Oh, yes," he replied, "the State Horse-Breeding Trust controls eleven hippodromes in Moscow, Lenin-grad, Sverdlovsk, Odessa, Kiev, Kharkov, Tiflis, Pyatigorsk, Frunze, Alma-Ata and Tashkent. Practically every city of any proportions in the Soviet Union has its race-track and breeding-stables; but only the ones I have named are controlled by our Horse Trust. The others are municipally controlled, though, of course, belonging to the State."

The Director invited me to tea in the restaurant. This was one of the very few non-rationed restaurants in all Russia. While we dined in leisurely fashion, I observed many a hungry winner gather in his harvest of roubles with eager hands and make a bolt toward the heaven of food that awaited him in the racetrack restaurant.

The Horse Trust horses, of course, always win; they

FORBIDDEN. Once again, a photograph caused your photographer's arrest. Why? Because this portrays a railway scene. Note the up-to-date equipment . . . the feverish activity . . . the prosperous, well-clad children.





FORBIDDEN. In the Don Basin: one of Russia's best motor roads. An innocent shot but *verboten* because photographs of power plants might reveal that they do not function so powerfully as we are led to believe.

are the only horses entered, which makes it easy when it comes to paying off the winner of the annual Soviet Derby. The grand prize on Derby Day amounts to 20,000 roubles.

As for the stables, the atmosphere reigning there was one of reverence for class. The stalls themselves were more spacious, cleaner, less crowded—one horse to a private stall—and more comfortable than the average Moscow workman's quarters; and the horses received far better treatment than the workers engaged in constructing a new civilization.

A few days later the enterprising Horse Trust publicity agent took me on a tour of the Moscow Horse Museum, the like of which does not exist, so far as I know, in England or France, where, as in Russia, the thoroughbred horse is worshiped as is the Sacred Cow in India. This museum—its official title was "Museum of Horse-Breeding"—was housed in what was once the de luxe Jockey Club in the Czarist days of racing.

On the walls were the finest possible paintings of horses, scenes in which horses appeared, etchings and prints galore depicting the life, death, habits, appearances of horses of noble birth . . . and it seemed significant that there were no work-horses in those paintings culled from the confiscated palaces of the old aristocracy. Excellent bronze statues of famous and elegant horses of Russian history were everywhere. There were even paintings in which the proud and merciless Cossacks rode their equally snooty mounts and often into the ranks of the Revolutionists. Framed and hung on the walls were fine

photographic enlargements of every generation of thoroughbreds since the advent of photography.

The Director of the Museum himself led us into the next exhibit, beaming in sheer pride at what he was about to disclose. There, in the anatomical department, reposing peacefully under glass cases, was an exhibit which vividly traced the origin and development of the horse, by means of sketches, books, documents, skeletons, et cetera. The less gay of the latter were gallstones, stomach stones and stomach ulcers.

As we left the Museum I glanced at the grand staircase and there, gazing proudly down at me from a landing, was the stuffed hero-horse of the Revolutionary Hero-General Budienny, looking for all the world as if the fiery old General himself had ridden him up the stairs and left him for the admiring gaze of posterity.

I also saw the magnificent Horse Trust Hospital. After the relief offered to humans at Dnieperstroy and in the Donetz Basin, I asked permission of the Chief Veterinary Surgeon to be quartered with the horses if I met with an accident in Russia.

I know physicians and surgeons, specialists of all sorts, who are packed in, six and eight to a room, in overcrowded Moscow. But each of the one thousand Horse Trust horses has a light airy stall all to himself. And if one of them so much as sneezes, he or she is rushed over to the Horse Hospital and placed under the care of a nurse—a lady nurse at that, one any human bachelor would appreciate.

If it is appendicitis, he is put on the operating table, given an anæsthetic and operated upon free. The horse is led into the operating room, alongside of what seems



to be a padded wall upright in the middle of the room. Strapping him to the trick wall arouses no suspicion: the horse thinks he is being harnessed. Suddenly the wall gently but firmly begins to turn over, impelled by a cranking attendant offstage, the patient is stretched out on the wall-table, discreetly covered with a canvas and in a jiffy finds himself dreaming that he is galloping over chloroform clouds.

After the operation he is led off to his private stall (there are no wards in this aristocratic institution) and given a bed of fresh clean straw. A nurse bustles solicitously in three times a day to take the horse's temperature and records the temperature, respiration, bowel movements and general condition on a neat chart at the foot of the patient's bed.

Possessing a Dental Clinic and a Mare Lying-in Department, all that the Horse Trust Hospital lacked to be like human institutions was an assortment of horse crutches, flowers, wheel-chairs for convalescents and visiting relatives with reasons why you shouldn't be squandering the family fortune in an expensive hospital.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### RED WAR

#### VOROSHILOV. . . .

Klementy Voroshilov, Commissar of War and Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy.

He is the dashing yet modest cavalry officer who is charged with preparing the Russian forces for an anticipated war. Handsome, quick to smile, possessed of dancing blue eyes, he appears younger than his fifty-three years. When he reins up his high-spirited horse in front of Lenin's Tomb to salute Dictator Stalin and *Polit-Bureau* members on May Day, his dynamic presence distinguishes him as supreme commander of one million men.

Arrest, exile, escape and instigation of mutiny in Czarist regiments are a few high lights of his career from coal miner to Red War Commissar. Not politically ambitious like Trotzky, who was exiled after having built the Red Army machine, Voroshilov continues in the confidence of the canny Stalin. Although willing to be Stalin's adjutant rather than rival, Voroshilov is powerful and capable enough to control the Red war machine and its political arm, the GPU.

In his zeal to make the harnessed peasants produce more and more grain, Voroshilov once sounded the alarm of capitalist invasion. The peasants took him literally and caused a panic by hoarding already scarce stocks of food and clothing. In order to undo his mistake, Voroshilov had to back down. He did this by declaring the danger inevitable—but not immediate.

Voroshilov's headquarters are in a building of the Supreme Military Council, which had been barracks and headquarters of the Czarist Army for the Department of Moscow. A stately quadrangle of buildings with a large courtyard inside.

It took, even in the company of a Foreign Officer, fifteen minutes to have our identification papers checked and to pass through the first military guard. The anteroom of Voroshilov's office was watched over by both a naval and an army officer, who reproached us for being late so it was with no great assurance that I finally stepped into Voroshilov's private office, stammering my apologies in broken Russian. Voroshilov, with his heels together, bowed graciously.

*"Eto tolka Americansky tempo,"* he said.

Which meant it was typical American tempo to be late—a good-natured crack at the idea that the Americans were the most efficient people on earth!

What particularly interested me in Voroshilov's office were some horse galoshes on a beautiful old eighteenth century bookcase. These rubber shoes for cavalry horses to wear on ice were of beautiful blue rubber with red five-pointed Soviet stars on them. I asked Voroshilov:

"Do you mean to say you are going to put galoshes on the feet of the entire Red Horse Army?"

"That is still in the experimental stage," he replied, "and we are not yet satisfied as to whether they will be practical."

I began to photograph and interview Voroshilov; Padolski interpreted for me.

*Abbe:* I have seen a great improvement in the Russian soldier since I was here five years ago. They seem more military and better drilled. This is of course a surface observation, but is it correct? Also I noticed how smart the uniforms are today: five years ago they were shabby.

*Voroshilov:* Correct! The Red Army soldier is much improved. Education in the schools has helped to make discipline. Our soldiers are not merely told this or that; they are taught why we must have an army.

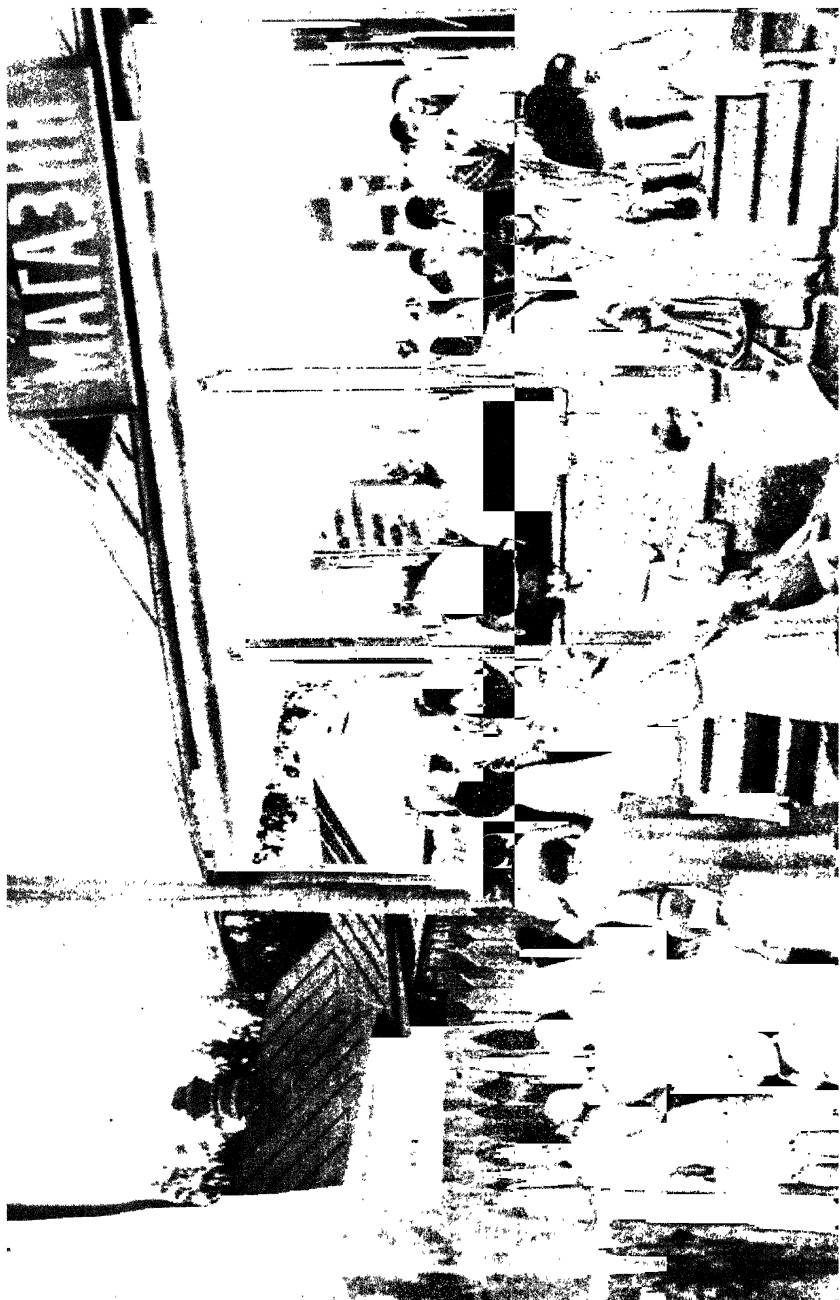
*Abbe:* What of the new Russian soldier?

*Voroshilov:* The old Russian soldier is dead. He died as you say, courageously. In his place we have the new Russian soldier, possessing all the courage of his predecessor but in addition the advantage of training in scientific warfare. You must surely realize that another war, based on a mechanized technique, would be won by the army which mastered the use of the most advanced technical weapons.

*Abbe:* Obviously the Soviet Union does not want a war; your industry could not stand the strain. Aside from that, when you train soldiers, don't you do like every other nation under the sun: I mean instill the will to win in them?

*Voroshilov:* Our standing Army is small; one year of conscription is not sufficient to persuade soldiers they must go to war to justify their military training. We

FORBIDDEN. A clothes queue and not enough clothes to go round. Your photographer once again jeopardized his trusty camera, his mortal neck and his immortal soul to record a prohibited scene.





Peasants who drove in from the country to the open market with a little food: potatoes. Unfortunately the prices were too high. There were no buyers, so the potatoes went back to the country.



would not want war, even if we were thoroughly industrialized. Our country is too vast for us to plan anything for its future other than building it up.

At two o'clock we stood in front of the Academy of Military Aviation, this old palace built by Catherine the Great.

"You know who used to live there?" asked Chumak, my assistant.

"No," I said. "Does it matter?"

"Well," he said, "it did matter then. It was Napoleon. And then ——"

"Then what?"

"Then it became what might be termed a harem for mistresses of high Czarist officials stationed in Moscow."

Reporting from the inside of the Academy was a job which Chumak had always said could never be done! No photographer or journalist, Soviet or otherwise, had ever set foot inside.

So, after we had presented our identification papers at the guard box in the outer wall, then stepped past the incredulous sentry, we had cause for congratulating ourselves.

The flower beds, the well-kept lawn were decidedly pleasant, unmilitary, reminiscent of the joyous Czarist Don Juans of yore. But in this setting smartly uniformed officers sped back and forth with military tread and the girls we saw in the palace were not courtesans. They wore the uniform of the Red Army, a marking on the tunic collar being the only distinction between officer and private: fliers were distinguished by wings. They

were being trained as technical engineers. They were snappy, business-like and alert.

As we entered the OD's office he rose from his chair and gave us a stiff salute. Within ten minutes he had composed a carefully organized list of the things I wanted to photograph.

"Perhaps," he added courteously, "you will see other things you would like to photograph, too."

When, later, he invited us to tea in the messroom of the palace—once the ballroom—where spotless waiters served excellent food à la carte amid great luxury, my respect for him increased.

The student officers, the élite of a million Red Army soldiers, were not only hospitable like all Bolsheviks but actually showed polish and elegance.

After tea we visited the newly constructed barracks, clubroom, laboratories, auditoriums, lecture hall, classrooms and the athletic field.

I saw only one example of dilapidation: an old minareted church, which stood boarded up and deserted, a stone's throw from the palace.

In contrast to the general suspicion elsewhere, the authorities here put me on my honor not to use any photographs without their permission. Soon even the guards who had run at me with fixed bayonets grew used to seeing me around the place.

The Commandant, a fine figure of a man not over forty years old, was most cordial to us. His office had once been Napoleon's bedchamber. In various parts of the palace itself I saw bits and pieces of furniture that dated back, some of them, to the eighteenth century.

The Commandant had four diamonds on his collar,

which signified that he was a General in Command of an Army—this despite the fact that the Officer of the Day whom I had first met assured me, with the religious fervor of the true leveler of humanity, that “there is no such thing as rank in the Soviet Army!” He said that even Commissar of War and Marine Voroshilov would be addressed by a member of the rank-and-file as *Tovarisch*.

I thought of the four diamonds on the Commandant's collar, the diamonds, triangles, rectangles, squares, from one to four of each, on the collars of other officers, the two squares on the collar of the Officer of the Day himself.

“If there is no rank in the Red Army,” I said, “what do all these collar insignia stand for?”

“Oh,” he said, “those markings merely represent the identical ranks of officers in *other* armies.”

“Do you have much divorce in the Army?” I asked a Comrade with the rank of Captain.

“I have been in this institution for two years,” he replied, “and I have not yet heard of a single case of divorce!”

I suggested that because of the ease with which divorce is obtained under the laws of the Soviet Government, most élite military corps in Russia might indulge, as they do in other lands, in varying marital fidelity with a little sexual diversion.

His reply, made in the presence of his wife, and confirmed by a bachelor officer I met, was that indulgences in any form were frowned upon by the Academy commanding officers, as tending toward the creation of a privileged military caste.

"Our work," he told me, "is of a serious nature and only men who are willing to devote serious attention to military aviation can remain here."

He also told me that these rankless student officers were paid according to their rank.

One of the most impressive figures I met during my week here was the internationally famous Major—or rather Comrade Nadejda Sumarokva, the only woman Army pilot in Russia and, so far as I can learn, the only one in the world. It was to her that Bruce Lockhart referred in his *British Agent*, a girl still feminine despite the man's uniform she wears so effectively, yet who, when she snaps out an order, makes mere males function as efficiently as a Prussian drill-sergeant would.

This charming Major laughed when I asked her if she belonged to the Soviet Caterpillar Club.

"What is this Caterpillar Club?"

I explained that membership is limited in America to those who have had to take to a parachute in an emergency.

"I suppose I should be at least an honorary member of your Caterpillar Club; several times I've resorted to that method of saving my life."

She paused thoughtfully, then added:

"But I shall never do it again! Next time a plane crashes, my career will too. A few years ago I injured my back so badly that the jerk from an opening parachute would smash it to bits!"

"Can you still fly?" I asked.

"*Pouchiemo niet?*" she said, "why not? I'm a soldier: a soldier cannot live forever."

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## CHAPTER XV

### *BANQUETS AND FAMINE*

**G**EORGE ANDREYCHEN, young, vigorous, dynamic white-haired graduate of Leavenworth Prison, leaned across his desk and proposed that I take a trip into the coal-mining region of the Ukrainian Donetz Basin.

As Moscow Director of *Amtorg*, the huge trading firm which negotiates between Soviet and foreign Big Business, George was a person worth knowing. Roumanian by birth, a troublemaker for any established order, he had used his considerable intelligence in America exhorting simpler-minded workmen to IWW activity against American Capitalists. In Russia, his job was reversed; it was his duty to impress visiting Capitalists that the Soviet workingman was getting a square deal.

Andreychen knew that I was working for the Photo Trust, the official Soviet photographic monopoly. He hinted that I'd been foolish to hook up with the Photo Trust and proved it by explaining how my American photographic colleague, Margaret Bourke-White, was the guest of the government immediately she crossed the frontier, received real coöperation by every govern-

ment bureau and official wherever she went. The only catch was that she thereby obligated herself to record the brighter side of industrialization among the Bolsheviks.

A visit to the Donetz Basin was somewhat different from that to the average Soviet town. Here was forbidden territory: I knew only two American reporters, Ralph Barnes of the *New York Herald Tribune* and Bill Stoneman of the *Chicago Daily News* who managed to slip down into Ukraine during the great 1932-33 famine. No sooner had they recovered from the shock than the GPU swooped down and shipped them back to Moscow. They had learned too much. They had learned, for one thing, that an entire town of thirty thousand people was suddenly removed en masse to a remote part of Russia, presumably Siberia, as punishment for united resistance to the joys of building a new civilization.

A couple of days after I agreed to Comrade Andreychen's proposal, "Comrade" Spencer Williams, one-time Ithaca, New York, newspaperman, now Moscow Director of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce—another propaganda bureau, came to see me. Casually, he suggested it was customary for foreign visitors to sign an affidavit stating they had seen no forced labor in the Ukraine.

"Is there none?" I asked as naïvely as I could.

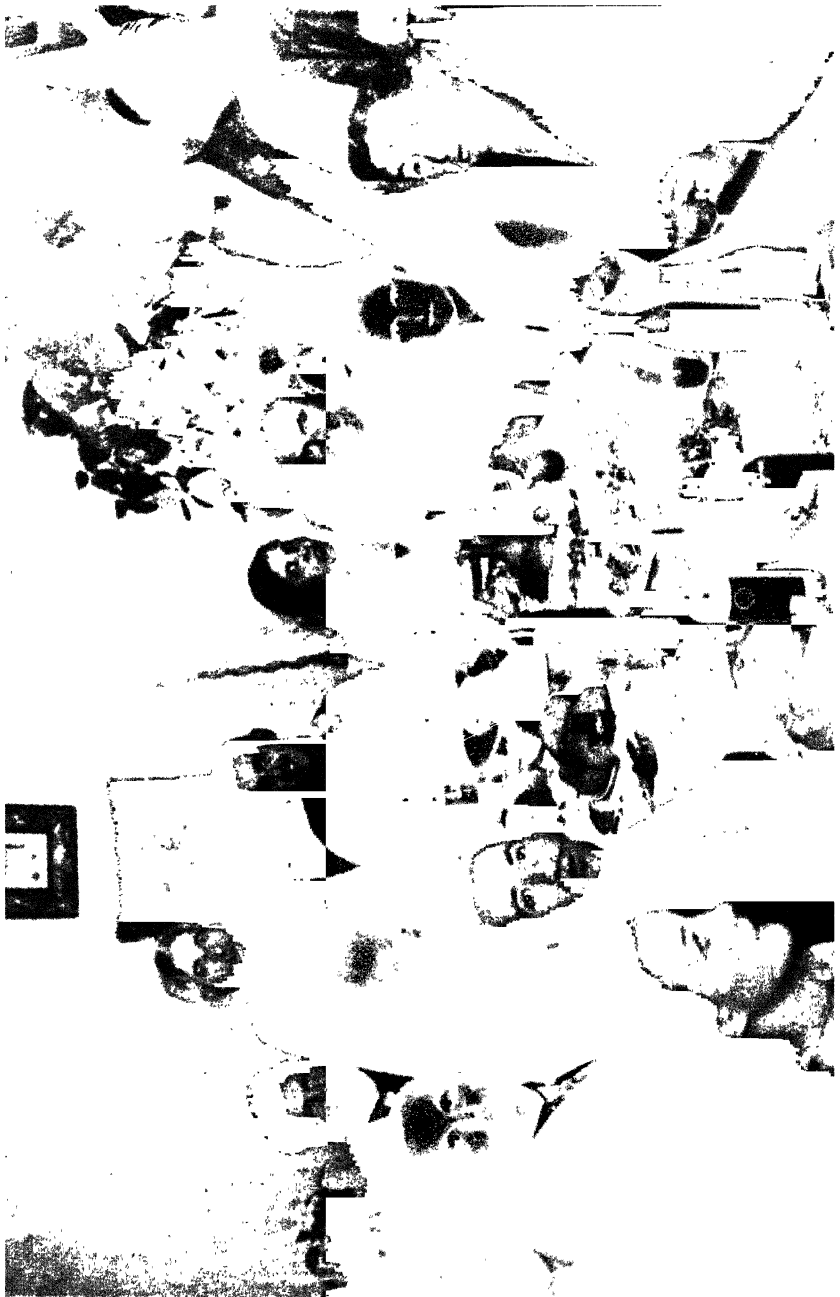
Williams scoffed at the idea. Indeed, why else was I being sent down there but to prove photographically that all was well? The Pennsylvania coal operators who had complained of Soviet dumping were hysterical!

"All right," I said, "if I see no forced labor down there I'll sign a statement to that effect."

When famine stalks the land, children are the first to be abandoned. A paternal government adopts them, educates them, fits them for a trade and makes useful little Bolos of them.







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While the peasant starves, your distinguished foreign visitor fares very nicely . . . especially if he signs an affidavit stating that he has seen no famine in the Don Basin.

.

In three days I was ready to go. I engaged Frank Herzog, Junior, a young American whose father was consulting engineer to the Steel Trust, as my assistant. Jerry Lifschitz was delegated to conduct our tour. Lifschitz, a little white-haired, hunchbacked Jew, was Andreychen's right-hand man and, as a matter of fact, had also served a Leavenworth term as an IWW. There is a large sprinkling of old IWW boys in Soviet Government positions.

In the party was an old fellow from the Coal Trust to see that "justice" was done for his firm, and Charlie Laws, the Canadian field-manager for the American firm accused of importing the "dumped" coal.

Except for our two spacious sleeping compartments the car was filled with GPU officials, most of them in uniform. On the platform of every station I saw droves of emaciated peasant women and children, who just stood and gazed blankly at the smartly uniformed GPU men and our well-fed little group. The station crowds were an old story to me: and the things these poor people offer for sale at rural depots in Russia are pathetic to the last degree: a frowsy ear of corn, a hard hunk of black bread, one egg, home-woven baskets, a pair of second- or third-hand boots, a half dozen crumpled cigarettes held up in a dirty, supplicating hand.

There is something terribly disconcerting about the way a bearded Russian peasant or a peasant woman with a sickly looking baby in her arms looks at one who has all the appearance of having dined well. Their eyes reminded me of eyes at the Pasteur Institute—the eyes of monkeys injected with germs or bacilli of syphilis or typhoid.

Lifschitz cautioned me against taking photographs at railway stations; I knew from past experience it was forbidden.

The spacious station at Kharkov was jammed with peasant families sleeping on their bundled-up luggage, staring fixedly ahead like victims of dementia præcox. They were waiting to board a train next day, next week or maybe not at all; they hoped to reach some distant point, no matter where, desperately forcing themselves to conceive, at the foot of the Red rainbow, not a pot of gold but bread! Alas! what shall one say of a people who can, in the course of eighteen months, lose seven million citizens from starvation, yet show a steadily increasing birth-rate?

During our brief stay in Kharkov we were wined and dined by the officials and attended a decidedly bourgeois-looking party at the home of an engineer. I managed to evade my guides to talk to Ukrainians who had nothing to sell. I discovered that underground opinion generally favored the secession of the Ukraine—the largest republic—from the USSR . . . if only it were possible. Ukrainians would even prefer German rule to participation—God save the mark—in alien Bolshevism. After all, the Ukrainians are a national entity and in no wise Russian. They have their own language, one of the one hundred and fifty-odd languages in the USSR, a language entirely different from Slavic Russian. Many Germans settled there, too.

The Ukraine is the most fertile grain country in the USSR, if not in the world; its people resent bearing the burden of feeding the vast Soviet Union and much of the outside world as well while even those of them

who "conform" cannot get enough to eat. Official Moscow has the jitters every time it thinks of the Ukraine, a perfect bait for capitalistic European countries that seek to expand. The Ukrainians themselves would very probably welcome any domination other than Bolshevik and the Bolos are afraid capitalistic countries may learn that the cards down there are stacked heavily in their favor.

It was early afternoon when we arrived at our destination, Krasnaya Luch. We were met by pretentious cars which were placed at our disposal for the following ten days' tour through the coal regions. The inevitable throngs of people crowded excitedly about us, hailing us as "American Comrades" and asking the usual questions:

"We have relatives in America, can you tell us of them?"

"Is it true that Russian anthracite is better than American?"

"How is the Revolution in America progressing?"

And the inevitable:

"Do Americans have plenty to eat?"

They gave us a cheer as we motored away for our first mine. But before we visited the mine we were installed in what is probably the only inn in the Soviet Union; the innkeeper, Ukrainian, had spent many years in America.

I had ridden in Moscow trams, I had sat for a Soviet dentist, my daughter had been bitten by a Bolshevik mad dog, I had rushed out of Joseph Stalin's office straight

past three alert armed guards without explanation, I had been up in a Soviet airplane, and I had survived all these risks. But I crossed myself more fervently than ever before when I scrambled into a coal gondola and started down into the bowels of Red earth into the star Soviet coal mine.

I didn't even like the expression on the face of the mine superintendent, a mechanically-minded German who must have known better than I the cave-ins and explosions they have. I liked even less the feeling I got when I looked about our slowly-descending vehicle and realized that Jerry Lifschitz, who had bravely endured such terrors in the cause of Revolution that his hair had turned completely white at an early age, stayed safely above ground!

Suddenly the cursed gondola stopped dead in mid-air or rather in mid-earth! I reached over to see if brave old Spencer Williams was there, just as he reached over to see if cowardly old Comrade Abbe was there; then we both reached to see if the wise old mine superintendent was there.

For a moment not a word was spoken.

Then I heard a voice echoing back from the mine shaft that sounded like the one idea in my nightmares when I am talking to myself. It said:

"Have we reached our destination?"

"Buried alive!" Spencer Williams echoed weakly.

The German mine superintendent, who had been wounded four times during the Great War, said:

*"Gott im Himmel!"*

Obviously, we all escaped. But when the chains gave

a sudden convulsive jerk and we started down that dark precipitous grade at double the previous speed, I felt even worse.

Right at the bottom of the shaft, like a mirage, was a brilliant, electrically lighted Red Cross station, cross and all, with a trained nurse in spotless white uniform, instruments in boiling water and a hospitable-looking operating table. From past experience the Bolsheviki have learned to be prepared.

I photographed it; then we went into one of the winding moleholes through which they brought coal. I decided to take a group picture of my comrades, when the superintendent remembered there was occasionally gas. My flashlight bulbs were supposed to be safety-proof. On the other hand, I could recall many instances when those bulbs had broken from the force of the explosion!

We sat down and discussed the pros and cons of a broken flash-lamp touching off any lurking gas and burying us for good and all. Chill water dripped on us from the earth just above our heads. There were no miners to be seen in any direction. The atmosphere was clammy; our only light came from a sickly pocket-flash.

Well, I took the photographs and we started on our way farther into Mother Earth.

"When will we see some miners actually at work?" I asked the engineer.

"There should be some near here," he said.

But the place proved deserted. When we finally arrived there was a gondola standing on the tiny track and one lone proletarian worker leaning on the car in meditation.

"Ah, here we are at last!" said our guide.

"Yes, but this isn't a busy enough scene to photograph," I objected.

"Oh, this isn't actually the place where they're digging the coal," he answered. "It's up here ——"

And he pointed to a hole in the side of our tunnel about as big around as a sewer pipe with a miniature track not much larger than a child's toy railway.

"Back in there," he said, "there's a group of miners actually mining the coal, and that's where you have to go to get the photographs."

"How far back?" I asked.

"Oh, not more than fifty meters."

Right then, without hesitation or shame, I spoke out:

"To hell with the photographs!"

"Did you get good pictures?" Jerry Lifschitz asked when at last we emerged from the Styx.

"No, we were so afraid you might be struck by lightning up here, exposed in the open like this, that we just couldn't settle down to our work!"

"What lightning?" he demanded suspiciously.

"God knows! Still, there's always a danger of lightning aboveground. I never really feel safe unless I'm down in the earth and Red earth preferred."

I know that men the world over are burrowing around underground, digging out coal that we sybarites up above may keep warm in our apartments—men who take their occupation as a matter of course and would, if they read this, label me a coward. I accept the impeachment; I admire their stomach for this work. But most of all I admire the Bolshevik miners of the next two or three



generations until the USSR build mines which are not full of cracked and broken supporting beams such as I observed in the star mine they proudly showed a foreign visitor to prove to him what Communism had done for coal-mining.

The vast, rich, wheat-producing Ukraine soil covers equally vast deposits of fine anthracite coal, the larger part of which is as yet untapped. The mines which produce coal are anything but well constructed; each individual mine does not yield its quota, yet for all that the total output is tremendous.

The next day we went into the question of forced labor. Of course, the armed soldiers situated in the mine shafts, power houses and tipples had bayonets fastened to their rifles and revolvers strapped to their belts; but they were doubtless guarding the property—though the superintendent failed to tell us what they were guarding the mines against.

Anyhow, the system of issuing and revoking food cards is far more sinister and effective than bayonets. Yet I have talked to many peasants slowly starving to death, preferring death to life as "happy workers for the greatest firm on earth." I have heard eyewitness stories of scenes in the streets of many Ukrainian villages where inert figures lie in the gutters, not drunk nor sleeping but dead of starvation. And the crowds of people on the streets take no more notice of the dead bodies than we would of a fire hydrant in America. Presently the bored-looking Sanitation Crew comes by in its spick-and-span wagon and hauls them off to the crematory.

Such workers as quit their jobs are either shot or shipped off to remote sections of the Union, Siberia and

the north, where they are again up against the choice of hard labor in the salt mines and timberland or losing their food cards and starving to death.

Under the supervision of Comrades Lifschitz and Williams and the official from the Coal Trust as well as mine bosses, engineers, and GPU men disguised as gladhanders to visiting foreigners, I did a fairly good job of playing up the gayer side of coal-mining in the midst of starvation.

We picked out types and subjects for the camera from the better nourished portions, made a swell hundred feet or so of beautifully built miners in their modern shower baths. By concentrating on the better-looking girls who were sorting coal just up from the mines on the conveyor, we got a shot which made the daily grind of bending over and picking out slate from the moving conveyor look like the joyous labor of a triumphant proletariat that made no distinction as to sex, the girls being permitted to indulge in as grueling toil as the men. It was not shown on the films that these girls and most mine workers were straining at muscular tasks on inadequately filled stomachs.

I took many other photos but our official guides would not sanction the filming of the series of banquets we attended all through the coal regions, for our films were to be projected in Russia and might show the natives that somebody was getting enough to eat. During the ten days we spent in the mining district it was impossible to sit down to a meal without facing a table groaning with caviar, roast turkey, chicken, cold fish of every description, pastries, even the rarest of all luxuries: tenderloin steak. An outraged peasantry several years ago

slaughtered two-thirds of the live stock of the entire Soviet Union; it will take a quarter of a century to make up for this terrible loss.

We visited one mine after another, with impressive new villages built around the tipples, schools full of well-fed children, modern hospitals and dental clinics, there were electric baths for miners, shower baths in the locker rooms at the top of the mine shaft, technical institutions, etc.

At Mariouple, the coal and grain exporting center on the Sea of Azov, we found a neatly laid out, prosperous-looking city. But the barber who shaved me in my cheerful hotel told me a story of horror and privation, in sight of plenty.

The countryside near Mariouple, he said, was a poor one for crops. The natives depended for food upon transportation from the north. Infrequent tramp steamers came in with loads of food which was not for sale; thousands of citizens lost their lives trying to get some of this food. He had seen hundreds shot down in the streets. Yet directly to the north was one of the richest grain countries in the world!

As the golden stream of life-sustaining manna poured continuously down a marvelous grain elevator, the citizens of Mariouple looked on with sunken, hungry eyes. I recalled the words of an aristocrat of the Old Régime who told me bitterly in French that the greatest of Soviet wonders, the Dnieperstroy Dam, was "certainly a Red triumph and why not? It was built on the blood of peasants!"

In mining town after mining town I would ask my guides to let me photograph stores to show how well the miners were provided with food. Each time they put me off on one pretense or another (Soviet guides have a full line of pretenses always at hand) until I implied there were no food stores and no food. That got results.

We were taken to a well-stocked store that looked like one of the general stores in our American rural communities. There was plenty to eat. There were clothing, garden utensils, wines, even toilet paper, a rare luxury in Russia. But access to this store was forbidden the lowly native.

I met a German and his wife who had left the Reich during the depression.

"As soon as my contract is up," he said, "I'm going back to Germany and live in comfort on the dole!"

"But you seem pretty well fixed here," I objected.

He smiled:

"The food is here," he said, "but I'm paid in inflated roubles; there's nothing left of my salary when we have eaten enough to keep us alive. What's more, so many starving peasants come to our door that we give away as much as we consume."

"How would your rations here compare with what you could have on the dole in Germany?" I asked him.

"Here it is perhaps a little better," he said, "but not much. Then there is no amusement, no chance to go to a city. Radio, yes; clubs, yes; movies, yes; but they give you only propaganda about the Communist Paradise and, even were it true, it would, the millionth time, bore you to tears."

"Are there many foreigners here?"

Lubyanka Square—a forbidden photograph. An officer of the GPU stood just off the left of the picture. They are destroying the ancient Chinese Wall and would destroy everything else but for valuta visitors who like to see old things.





FORBIDDEN. GPU lined up outside the Kremlin Wall. In the background, the monument to the memory of John Reed, American Communist, who lies buried within, cheek by jowl with Lenin.



"Twenty or thirty."

"Do they feel the same way?"

"Most of them were Communists in Germany. They are more disheartened than I because they expected to find in Russia a proletarian dictatorship."

"Doesn't the proletariat dictate?" I asked.

"No, the Communist Party dictates and Stalin dictates to the Communist Party."

Discovering us in animated conversation the mine superintendent rushed up, so my German friend broke into a glowing account of Soviet accomplishment. But his wife signaled to me disparagingly as who might say:

"My husband must not speak openly against the System; please do not disclose his earlier statements."

As we left, I extolled the food store for foreigners, but asked if I might inspect the food store for Russians.

Four or five times as large as the foreigners', it contained only one-fourth the food. There was a long queue waiting; it was easy to tell that the ration was meager. Across from the store was a bread shop where there was also a queue.

Another day, through some oversight of my usually cautious guides, we passed what is known in Russia as an open market, where anyone is privileged to buy anything he likes, can find or afford. I saw only a few lots of sugar—at twenty roubles (ten dollars) a pound. One pound would have eaten a ten per cent hole in the monthly salary of a miner. But the customers were not miners; they were the indescribably pathetic peasants who had no food card at all.

According to my guide, all these hungry-looking people were "speculators" which justified their treatment.

The word in Russian has as sinister a sound as "kidnapper" in America. Many of the actual "speculators" eke out a precarious living until they are caught: they act as brokers for grafting Bolshevik officials who have access to food.

The larger portion of these people had come to market just to look at food or on the off chance of a surreptitious gift, which among the naturally kind-hearted Russians is often tendered, and with disastrous results when discovered.

A peasant told me:

"The peasants won't work, for if they go into the collectivized farms they must give up all opportunity of rising above the laziest of the workers, and if they do work hard on the plot allowed them as private farmers, such a large percentage of their crop is taken by the government at arbitrarily low prices that the remainder does not justify the labor."

Millions of peasants prefer death to their lot as farm workers under the Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Party.

"There's a gypsy trial out in the country," said Elmer Rice over the phone, "and you'd better come along with us and see the fireworks. We'll call for you in the car."

Elmer explained that we were going to a trial of gypsy chieftains arrested by the Bolsheviks for trying and executing several of their own number. The authorities weren't half so appalled at this summary taking of human life as piqued that the gypsies had persisted in trying to maintain their separate government.

The trial was held in a large rambling wooden building. There were some five or six thousand gypsies, men, women and children, chattering excitedly, surrounding the building as we drove up.

Whereas Russians lack color in their clothes, due to the difficulty of manufacturing or importing dyes, these gypsies had somehow managed their characteristic brightly colored bandanas, scarves, shawls and numerous earrings.

They nearly mobbed us out of sheer curiosity. A squad of GPU men hastily cleared a space around us.

"Here's where we make a collection of lice," said Elmer Rice.

"Here's where the gypsies make a collection of watches and chains and cameras from Abbe," said young Bobbie Rice.

"It is also possible that Intourist may lose the wheels of one of its cars," our guide concluded.

The doors were officially opened and the gypsies poured in like ants. The proletarian judges really looked proletarian in their working shirts.

On the wall behind the judges' stand were the inevitable Red flags and banners, busts of Lenin and Stalin and highly colored posters of Bolshevik big shots. The Russian decanter of boiled water stood upon the table.

If ever in the history of trial by court the accused looked superior to the judges, it was on this occasion. The defendants were between thirty and forty; their classic heads and features gave the dignity of knowledge that only the accumulation of gypsy lore from generation to generation throughout centuries could have molded. The trial lasted several days. And the prisoners were so

clannish and secretive that they were finally discharged for lack of evidence.

Sitting next to me during the trial, a man who spoke German and said he was a reporter for a gypsy newspaper, finally agreed to show me the gypsy papers and to guide me through some of the gypsy camps and clubs.

The gypsy press is marvelous! They have a daily, a weekly and a monthly paper, all three with more social items about individual gypsies than any other Soviet paper I investigated. The editor of the daily had written three books and two plays; the Zingari had their own theater. The daily was a four-sheet affair and except for the personal items was as full of propaganda as *Izvestia* (*The News*), organ of the Soviet Government, or *Pravda* (*Truth*), organ of the Communist Party.

The club was in one of the old parts of Moscow; its members, very different from their brethren in the country, wore orthodox Bolsheviki clothes. They had their own language as well as Russian and one night they put on a show which reminded me of the scenes in Balieff's *Chauve Souris*. We had a little dance after the show and I spent a busy evening trying to adapt my step to the gypsy style of dancing.

"But why a gypsy newspaper?" I asked.

The editor explained that gypsy periodicals were an inspiration of the Soviet Government, which saw a chance to spread the word of Communism amongst the gypsies. Very sensibly the government did not try to interfere with gypsy customs so long as the customs did not conflict drastically with the Communist program. But their ultimate goal was eventually to absorb these nomadic people in to the coöperative communistic State.

"The Soviet Government," he went on, "also allows gypsies, on their travels, to cultivate land not already in use, so they may get food."

The editor, a GPU war veteran, was now Major in the Red Army reserves: a staunch Bolshevik and a member of the Communist Party, he believed his race would ultimately make good Soviet citizens.

He introduced me to his wife, a girl who, I learned to my surprise, was not a gypsy! There had been dire mutterings amongst the tribe when he flouted their code by marrying her but he stuck to his guns and finally quieted their misgivings.

He took me also to a workshop run by the group, a concession from the government for the packing and distribution of tea. The employees, mostly girls, were the most beautiful I saw outside of the Ukraine.

"They won't work in the summertime," he said with a sly smile, "though we've converted them to wintertime work in the shops because warm living quarters are better than tents when it's cold. But when spring comes they always leave for the road."

The camp we visited was no different from one you might see in America, England, or France; it lay between two enormous steel high-tension electric towers, symbolizing the progress of industrialization. It was, of course, quite as filthy as the filthiest gypsy camp I ever saw.

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## CHAPTER XVI

### RED EDUCATION, RED DEATH, RED FUNERAL

THE shower bath was making a noise like the Dnieperstroy dam, the children were taking their early morning bath. It began to filter through my befuddled mind that the children were singing a good old English or American nursery song, *London Bridge Is Falling Down*. Where the devil had they heard that? They had never been in England or America. I listened more carefully: and this is what they sang!

*“Capitalism’s falling down, falling down, falling  
down,  
Capitalism’s falling down, so said Lenin.  
Communism’s going up, going up, going up,  
Communism’s going up, so says St--aa---lin.”*

I called the little army to attention to explain where they had learned this version of the song of my childhood.

“At school,” they replied. “And we know another nice one too:

## I PHOTOGRAPH RUSSIA

*One, two, three, pioneers are we,  
We join the proletariat, against the  
bourgeoisie,  
Four, five, six, happy Bolsheviks,  
We go on demonstration,  
And fight the fat, fat dicks."*

"What are demonstrations?" I inquired.

"What you do on the streets against the capitalists' governments."

"What is a capitalist government?"

"America and Germany, England and France."

"What is capital?"

Only my daughter, the eldest of the three, could answer that.

"Money," she said.

"What are big, fat dicks?" I insisted.

"Oh, Amerikanische Politzei."

"You used to know all the politzei in Berlin," I said.

"Have you forgotten Willy, your old friend on the Friedrich Ebertstrasse? (No, Hermann Goeringstrasse.) Don't you remember how he used to have coffee with us and take you and Mamma for a ride on his motorcycle? What about Hans who spoke French to you because he learned it in a French prison during the war?"

"Oh, yes," they said, "they're all right. It's the dicks in America are bad!" said Patty.

"How do you know? You've never been in America."

"Our teacher says all politzei are bad! They put poor people in jail so rich people can have parties."

So I decided to have a look at their school!

The absolute genius of my children for getting ac-

quainted with policemen was exemplified when we got off the tram and they all said good day to the Bolshevik traffic cop. I was introduced as "Papa, the friend of Stalin"; the policeman seemed delighted to meet me.

The school building was a two-story affair, once a residence fronting directly on the sidewalk; there was a courtyard in the rear where the children could work off what surplus steam failed to escape in the classroom.

The school, which was for the children of foreign residents in Moscow, was divided into two departments, one for the German-speaking, the other for the English-speaking children. The child comrades mostly from East Side New York, the Germans from Wedding in the Communist North End of Berlin.

The entrance hall was pandemonium. I snatched Patty back and asked her what was the matter.

"Nothing! we're just going to class!"

I introduced myself to the teacher; she took advantage of the unexpected opportunity to complain about the children's conduct. An East Side New York Jewess, who wore glasses and spoke East Side English, she had no idea of how to enforce discipline, but she was kindly with the children. Both she and the principal were the exact type of Jewish-American Communists that support Communism in America: apparently misfits in the USA civilization, they nevertheless possess a certain amount of sincere fervor.

I asked if I might observe the classes in session.

"Why, sure," she said and I did.

Evidently the entire student body majored in politics; the three Rs must have come much farther down on the list.



"One trouble with your little boy," said the teacher of Richard's class, "is that he thinks he must have special privileges because you are a friend of Stalin."

"I'll set him right on that," I said.

The class in the Russian language was the most interesting. Few of these children had been in Russia more than a year, yet they seemed to understand Russian as well as they did their native tongue.

I asked the principal of the school if he thought it was a good thing to bring up the children with the idea of fighting policemen. He said:

"We make it very plain that they are not to fight proletarian policemen but only the police of capitalist countries."

"Are they also taught to respect soldiers?" I inquired.

"Red Army soldiers, of course, as they are for the defense of the Soviet Union and the proletarian dictatorship," he replied.

"They also receive anti-religious training?" I asked.

"Naturally," he said.

The classroom was crowded to overflowing. On the walls were brilliantly colored chromos of Stalin, Voroshilov, Molotov and of Lenin. The children chattered and groaned during the recitation. While the school was supposed to operate on schedule, classes often started late and finished beyond the school hour.

There were blackboards such as we have in American schools. The teacher sat on a raised platform. There were a few plants in the window which the children had been asked to donate. The lunchroom was something to remember, for here the last vestige of discipline was

relaxed: they played, shouted and threw bread balls back and forth.

Pandemonium broke loose when school let out and all the children tried to get their wraps out of the one tiny cloakroom. No checks were issued; each child pointed out his or her belongings.

The embassy children had a school in which only embassy children were permitted. And just before we left Moscow, a school was started with a special dispensation from the Soviet Government for foreign children whose parents were not grooming them for Bolshevism, because the German Government had at that time permitted a Communist school in Berlin.

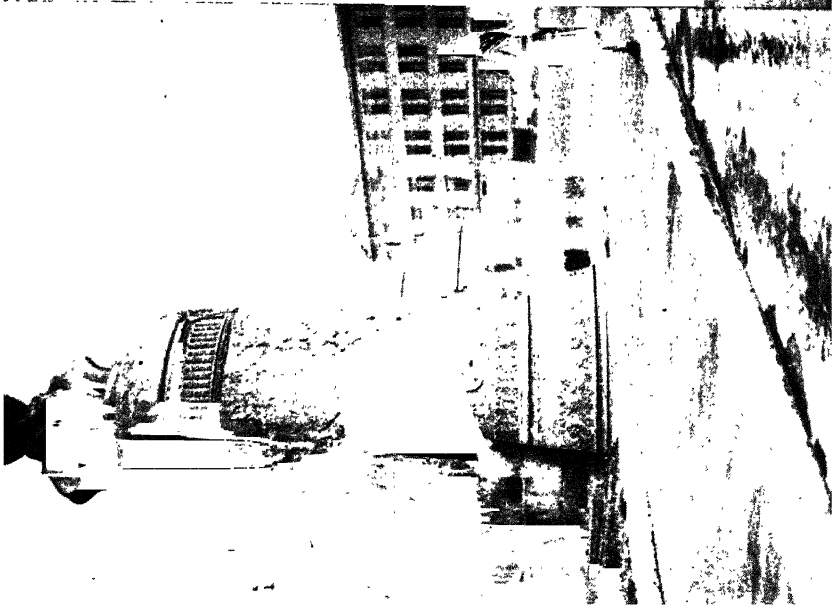
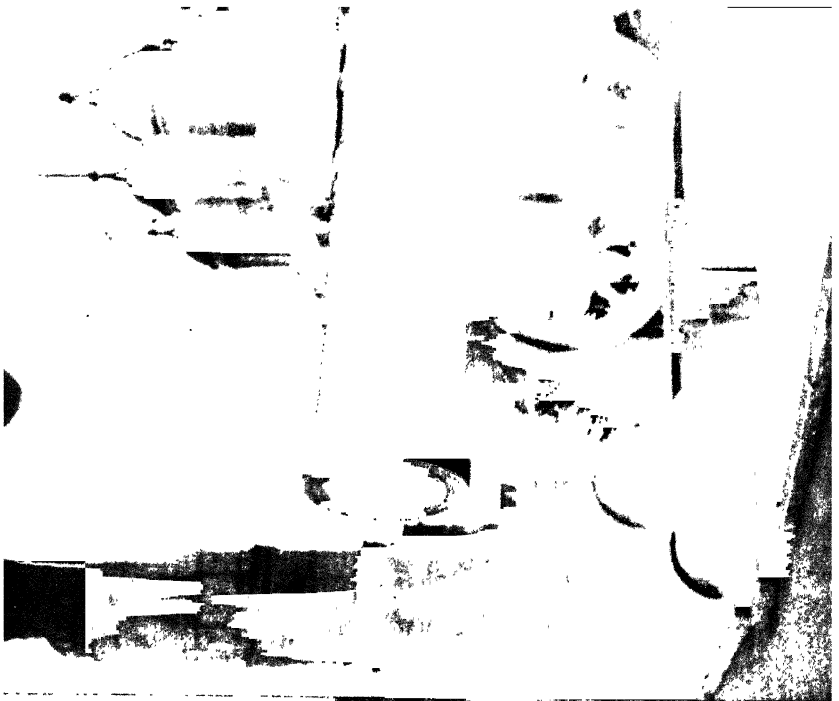
My children left their Moscow school in time to escape total immersion in science, which rivals atheism as the new Bolshevik religion.

In the Leningrad laboratory of Professor Pavlov I saw a normal dog. I know he was normal because the first assistant of the world-famous physiologist told me so. Professor Pavlov himself had pronounced the dog normal though the entire right side of the animal's brain had been removed!

I looked at this "normal" dog and it suddenly struck me that the Soviet system of education was not unlike Pavlov's experiment on this dog. They didn't have to remove the right sides of all the brains of the Russian children in their care. They merely taught the children to use only one side of their brains. They taught the Bolshevik children to turn only to the left!

After Red youth, Red age; after Red life, Red death.

White Elephants of the Kremlin: the biggest bell and biggest cannon in the world. Exhibit A crashed to the ground before it was ever rung; Exhibit B was never fired because of faulty construction.





FORBIDDEN. Madame Stalin's funeral. Below, soldiers; on every roof, sharpshooters with levelled rifles. Orders were to fire if a window were opened. I took fifteen chances on my life in taking as many shots from the Grand Hotel.

"Stalin's wife is dead!" yelled Chumak, bursting into my hotel room.

"Yeah? Who killed her?"

"She just died," said Chumak, "nobody knows how."

"Well, anyway," I said, "her funeral ought to be good for a few shots."

"Not a chance," said Chumak. "Orders have been issued forbidding any photographs of the funeral to be taken."

Immediately I began figuring how I could manage to sneak in a few shots. It was all very mysterious, this death of the wife of the Red dictator and it became even more mysterious when the news got out that she was going to be buried instead of cremated! Weird rumors about the cause of her death and the reason for her burial seeped through underground Moscow channels. The affair was the talk of the Foreign Colony.

It has since been pretty well established that Madame Stalin died of peritonitis; it is equally well known that Stalin was deeply in love with her and went around in a daze for some time after her death. One of the milder rumors hinted that Madame Stalin had specifically asked to be buried because she had never been really weaned from religion. This was possibly true in part; but it seems more likely, as finally became the consensus of opinion, that Stalin was so in love with his wife that, despite his unshaken anti-religious beliefs, he couldn't bear to think of her body being burned up!

Madame Stalin was Stalin's second wife; he had divorced his first to marry her. She was the daughter of Alliluiev, an old revolutionary Comrade of Stalin's; he married her when she was seventeen, he forty. She had

no part actually in the government and submitted to all the regular discipline.

Now Madame Stalin was dead—and if I wanted to get a photograph of her, after having been once balked during the May Day celebration, this was my last chance!

To be seen with a camera on the day of Madame Stalin's funeral was not good for health, liberty or life! We employees of *Soyuzphoto*, usually favored, were this time forbidden to attempt any funeral photographs. Orders were issued by the GPU that all windows should be closed along the route of the funeral procession. Parallel lines of soldiers and GPU men lined the streets from Red Square to the cemetery, bristling with cocked rifles, alert for the first sign of disobedience of the newly issued regulations.

For a while I sat in my room and weighed my chances of getting away with a few photographs. I had taken big chances before to get scoops—and I recalled the hundred fifty mile ride across the Mexican desert with Federal forces in the time of the 1929 Revolution. On that occasion I rode on a truck right across the bumpy ground, the truck loaded down with bombs and gasoline, the bomb detonators all set for immediate use, rattling and banging together most disconcertingly. Should I try this? First I decided to reconnoiter.

As I skirted the Kremlin walls to the left, I was curtly informed by a GPU that nobody was permitted in Red Square except the police and soldiers. Then three Red guards at the entrance to the Grand Hotel barred my way. But I represented myself as a guest of the hotel and a fourth guard relented.



The hotel lobby was full of GPU men, who challenged me menacingly.

On the spur of the moment I recalled a photographic colleague who lived there. Finally, I managed to argue my way to his room which, as it happened, had an outlook straight onto Red Square. The photographer was not in but his wife admitted me and consented to my viewing the spectacle from her window.

Nervously I edged up to the locked window. I knew what would happen if I appeared at the window with a camera or even stuck my head out of it without one. I would have been shot from across the street without ever knowing what had hit me! Had I been only wounded, the sharpshooters would have crossed the street and packed me off to prison. And that meant deportation.

As I turned back from the window to speak to my hostess I saw an object lying on the desk. It was a small German camera. It put notions in my head and the journalist in me overcame discretion:

"Yes, my husband has a telephoto lens," she replied to my question.

Wondering if she knew of the edict forbidding pictures, I asked her if she minded my taking a few shots: I hadn't brought my own camera, hadn't expected to get such a good view. . . . She consented and I edged up to the window again.

The soldiers two floors down across the street were lining up the carefully selected procession. A few riflemen in the upper windows across the way were on the watch.

I began to fidget. But when the most gigantic hearse I had ever seen, painted a vivid red, pulled up and stopped

right in the center of Red Square I could resist no longer. I screwed on the telephoto lens and very gently, very slowly I opened the double windows—and took a quick shot of Madame Stalin's funeral in Red Square.

The procession moved slowly, in time to the music of Chopin's Funeral March played by the Red Army band in a setting incongruous with the music's original religious intent. Four beautiful black horses, tasseled and garnished with red, drew the vivid hearse behind the band. Then came the group of mourners, walking five abreast for fully half a mile: officials of the government, of the Party and of the textile industry in which Madame Stalin had worked. At the head of the mourners walked Joseph Stalin himself in gray (not black) semi-military overcoat and cap.

Having that one shot to my credit I wavered. Should I stop while I was ahead of the game? Or should I risk another one with a different exposure?

Weakening again, I got by with my second shot. I shot a third—and still nothing happened. Then, as the procession moved down by the corner of the Kremlin Wall, I lost my head. Leaning far out of the window I got two shots from that angle. Something prompted me to look across the street before taking another and I was just in time to see a sharpshooter snap his rifle to his shoulder!

I rushed back from the window as if all hell were on my heels. Stopping just long enough to unload the camera and thank my hostess, I dashed downstairs.

As I sauntered out on the sidewalk and started around behind the police lines three soldiers came hurrying

across the street, cocked rifles in their hands, on the run for the hotel.

Several weeks later I smuggled the forbidden photos out of Russia—the negatives were about the size of postage stamps sewed in the trousers of my youngest son.

Once on the way up from the Donetz basin I fell into a conversation with a foreign engineer on his way out of Russia, after more than a bellyful of “building Socialism.” I entertained him with horror stories of the Ukraine. For a while he listened patiently, then stopped me with a deprecating smile and told me the prize horror story of all time. He had it straight from a prominent Canadian engineer who, though coining *valuta* working for the Bolsheviks, was too revolted to stick to his excellent job.

Calder was on an automobile trip through the Turkistan Republic, one of the Soviet states. It was winter. They were crossing a vast desert-plain. It was snowing heavily.

All along the road, on both sides, for hours as they moved forward, Calder noticed an almost continuous pile of what appeared to be logs; the snow was drifting over these piles too heavily to allow one to note exactly what they were. He wondered about it but kept silent.

Suddenly his Soviet guide-chauffeur stopped the car, descended, threw one of the “logs” from the path of the car on to the pile and continued along the road.

This happened several times. Calder’s curiosity finally got the better of him.

“What are those things you keep throwing out of the

road—those things piled up under the snow? Are they logs?”

Strange that logs should be piled beside this desert road which boasted of not a tree and hardly a shrub of any kind.

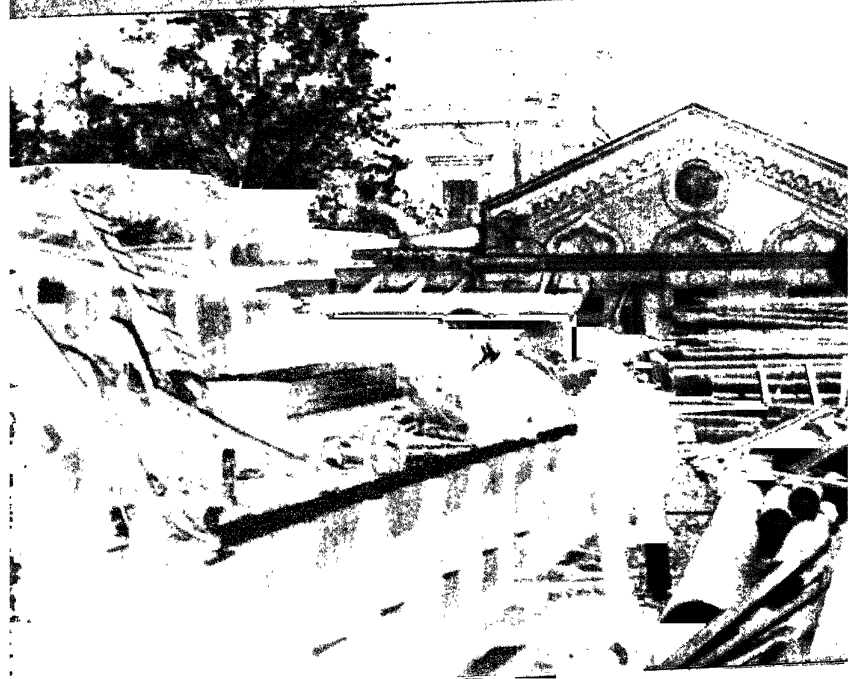
The driver, laughing, turned in his seat.

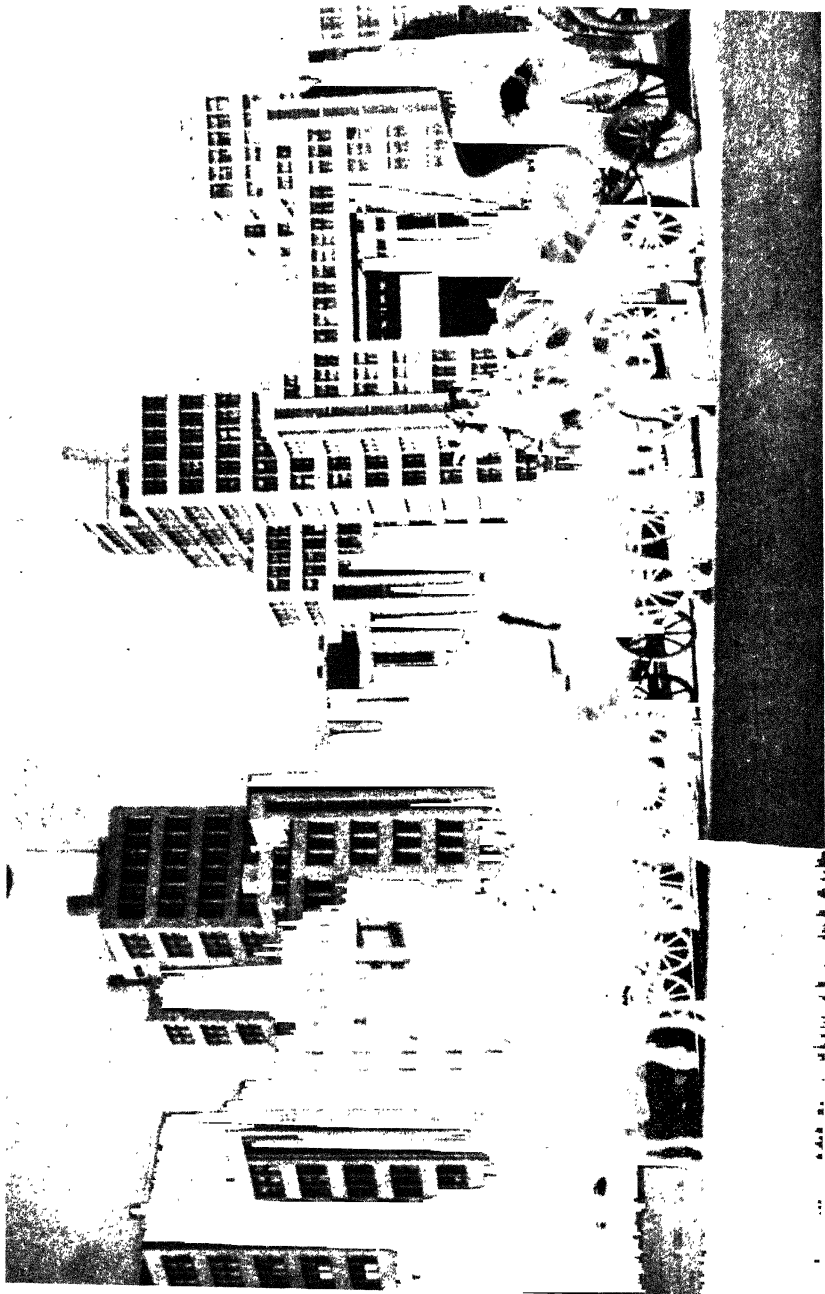
“Oh, no,” he said casually, “those aren’t logs. You see, this road leads out of the Soviet Union to countries where you can have food by merely going into a restaurant. Thousands of peasants, their food cards confiscated, try to get out of Russia. But most of them are too weak to make it. . . . No, those are not logs.”

His voice trailed off:

“Those are stiffs!”

Building socialism means destroying very many things, whether the entire courtyard of the famous old Winter Palace in Leningrad (the beautiful gateway goes next!) or just another condemned church.





Occasionally the most confirmed skeptic must take his hat off to the Bolos for a first-rate job. Here is the Ukrainian government building at Kharkov—a beautiful piece of architecture.



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## CHAPTER XVII

### *PLAYING WITH GIANT TOYS*

THE Russians are the world's greatest chess players," Capablanca, the Cuban chess champion, once told me in Havana, adding, "because they think in the abstract."

Picture, then, a nation of 160,000,000 abstract thinkers seated at the huge chess table which is the USSR, their stomachs empty, their very existence uncertain as the winds bite through the chinks in their clothing, yet their minds racing excitedly ahead into the future, planning, scheming, conniving at the future checkmating of Capitalism. Yet—each individual chess player arbitrarily cast as an integral part of the Marxist program, the most ruthlessly unimaginative and materialistic of philosophies. Strange paradox!

How do they play to achieve this checkmating? By means of their gleaming chessmen, those fascinating toys—the machines.

Machinery is everywhere in Soviet Russia. Harvesters, turbines, factory and mining machinery, steam locomotives, construction engines, stoves, radios, war tanks, airplanes . . . a veritable fairyland of amazing new toys, plans for more toys and for improvements upon the exist-

ing types. It is difficult to say whether the Russian gets more enjoyment out of the machines themselves or from drawing up blueprints for more of them.

The Russian that up to a few decades ago had lived a practically machineless existence is now engaged in an enthusiastic frenzy of experimentation with these marvelous new machines—putting them together, taking them apart, oiling them up, repairing them, stoking their vitals, tooting their whistles, and jabbering excitedly about them, praising them lavishly when they work and shrugging their shoulders philosophically when they don't.

More often than not they don't work! For there must be technical knowledge—and that the Russians do not yet possess: so Russia is dotted with abandoned rusty machinery, half-finished and never-to-be-completed projects forgotten forever, lost in the inspiration for newer and, they optimistically hope, better machinery and projects.

Like many of the more visionary of their kind, this vast collective army of chess players has become so wrapped up in what is going to happen many moves ahead (maybe) that the players are apt to overlook the immediate fundamentals upon which those future moves must be built.

This heads-in-the-clouds attitude of the impractical but imaginative Russians is exemplified in the history of their project for a grand Soviet Palace, conceived as a monument to the success of the Soviet régime.

In order to construct this massive edifice it was necessary to tear down several square blocks in the heart of Moscow's residential district. This despite the fact that

Moscow is overcrowded with humanity packed sardine-like into pitifully inadequate living quarters.

Some five thousands workers were crammed into the space required for the Soviet Palace. Despite this fact the buildings were torn down and those turned out were herded into flimsy, hastily constructed wooden barracks on the outskirts of the city.

Two months later the buildings had all been demolished and the space cleared for the Soviet Palace. Then, and only then, was it suddenly discovered that the projected monument to Soviet progress would cost about \$100,000,000 in *valuta*. The government could not afford such a sum! So the Soviet Palace is still in the blueprint stage: the space left vacant by the tearing down of the buildings was made into another of Moscow's many parks and the five thousand workers are still living in their ramshackle "temporary" barracks.

Again, Soviet officials planned a mammoth stadium, the super-stadium of the world, a stadium to end all stadia. The bureaucrats had already ordered five thousand wheelbarrows when it was suddenly discovered that to install a narrow-gauge railroad track and dumping-cars would mean a great saving in time and labor. Just as well this was discovered in time, for, a few weeks later, officials in charge of construction learned that the wheelbarrow plant could not possibly catch up with its back orders for another year. A later estimate added the hitherto unsuspected fact that it would have taken the number of men on the job ten years to remove and pile up the dirt—provided they had obtained the wheelbarrows they never got and that the men who were not available had worked that long. Finally when they came to providing

the narrow-gauge track and the required locomotives and cars, they discovered that such necessities were quite as difficult to acquire as had been the wheelbarrows.

The whole project was dropped. In the meantime thirty or forty engineers and draftsmen had used up several months of time and labor and heaven knows how much drawing paper, pencils and tracing cloth.

In my hotel was an Austrian I had known in Berlin. It was he who had conceived the idea of a typical American restaurant in the Kurfürstendamm, a new and quasi-fashionable residential and shopping district of Berlin. This Austrian Jew had imagination. He designed, constructed and managed for two years what is well known to Americans visiting Berlin as Roberts Restaurant. It is more American than anything we have in America.

The Soviet Restaurant Trust engaged Roberts to come to Moscow and help with "building Socialism" by designing the most gigantic series of chain restaurants the world has ever seen. The first few weeks of his stay in Moscow his face glowed with the enthusiasm of putting into operation this fantastic scheme. He was given a staff of embryo architects and feeding experts, an interpreter, a private office in the building of the Restaurant Trust. He was having a swell time until somebody conceived the idea of finding out where the money, material and labor were coming from. Then some canny person brought up the question of where was the food coming from. The whole project was dropped, and poor old Roberts returned to Vienna disillusioned and deflated.

In 1932 the Bolsheviks became suddenly rabbit-minded. Somebody had called to the attention of the experts (?) that rabbits were prolific and nourishing.

A campaign was immediately launched and posters of happy little rabbits eager to be eaten were placed everywhere. Rabbit farms were started and the residents of overcrowded Moscow were encouraged to breed rabbits in their already cramped living quarters. I was never quite able to learn what happened to the rabbit project except that the brainstorm passed.

The Russians have always thought in superlatives. Their projects have either brought gasps of admiring amazement through their startling success or have failed dismally. They have never done anything fairly well; their minds simply do not run to the middle course.

The Soviets built the world's largest landplane. It crashed. But they built others equally as large and they are still going. They constructed the world's largest stratosphere balloon. They couldn't get it off the ground. They tried again—and broke the world's record!

The natural-born Russian tendency to take things apart to see what makes them tick cropped up in the case of a friend of mine who had been sent to Moscow by an American firm which had just sold the Soviets a highly complicated and delicate piece of machinery—price \$50,000.

My friend, forewarned of this tinkering complex, had taken the wise precaution of securing from the GPU an order forbidding any Russian workman to touch the machinery.

Lulled by the sense of security this order gave him, the American engineer went ahead installing the machinery. Work progressed without a hitch until, some three months later, the machinery was all set up and ready to operate.

Breathing a sigh of relief, the engineer took a train out of the country before anything could happen. He got as far as Berlin, where he received a wire stating that something had gone wrong with the machinery; he must return to Moscow immediately and put it in order again.

Back in Moscow, he discovered that while he was en route to Berlin, the curious Russian workers, unable longer to restrain themselves, had taken the entire piece of machinery apart to see how it worked—and couldn't put it together again! It took the American engineer and the workers another three months to reassemble the machinery.

Connecting the government house, on the left bank of the Moscow River, and the approach to the Kremlin, on the right, is a bridge I have never seen overcrowded with traffic. Nevertheless, during my daily walk along the river bank, I used to stop and watch a large gang of workers sinking the foundations of a new bridge within a hundred feet of the old.

The massive stone foundations were all in place, ready to receive the span, when suddenly the men stopped work. I supposed it was because the materials for the rest of the bridge had not arrived. Nearly two months later I accidentally learned what had happened, from an engineer on the staff which is planning a new Moscow. After seven months on the job they discovered that the bridge would miss the streets on either side of the river by the same hundred-foot margin which is apparent to the most unpracticed eye.

When I left Moscow new foundations for still another bridge were being erected, a hundred feet from the abandoned one, to connect up two entirely different streets.

On the campus at dear old Moscow. Whether cramming al fresco for their examinations or lunching in the commons of the university, students and co-eds are much the same the whole world over.





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Waitresses learning their job in the model restaurant of a combine factory. A young Komsomala coaching Soviet children in dramatics. And a country group brought to town by the government for a May Day celebration.

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The first granite foundation will probably remain for centuries.

The classic example of the Russian tendency to leap before looking is found in the oft-repeated tale of the construction of the magnificent Dnieperstroy Dam, which can generate enough power to run every factory within a three hundred mile radius.

Unfortunately, the number of actually constructed factories within this radius amounts to about a half dozen. The others are all in the blueprint stage, to remain there until the government raises enough money to build the factories for whose operation the dam itself was constructed.

With true Russian fatalism, the first important building to be erected on the site of an aluminum plant which was to derive its power from Dnieperstroy was not the factory itself—but the repair shop!

The above are but a few examples of the waste that is apparent everywhere in Russia today. The average estimate of one foreign engineer after another is that eighty per cent of all construction work done under the Five-Year Plan, even if completed, will not hold together ten years and that millions of dollars' worth of machinery will not be worth repairing in considerably less than that time.

There is, of course, practically no private business in Russia today. The government-owned industries are divided up into "trusts," the profits of which, if any, revert to the government.

The fanatical devotion to the almighty norm, regardless of results, is an ironclad principle which applies straight through production in every branch of industry.

A locomotive plant turns out so many beautiful, poster-like locomotives each week. The factory reports go through various hands and eventually arrive at headquarters in Moscow. This is further than most of the locomotives get. There is a repair shop attached to every factory. There has to be. Sometimes the repair shop is larger than the factory itself. Each locomotive repair shop, as well as the factory itself, has a norm and it looks fine, on the books, to see how many locomotives have been repaired during the week. This does not alter the fact that fifty per cent of the work in the repair shop would not have been necessary had the locomotives left the original factory in anything like good condition.

Just as there are no people in the world who delight more in erecting impressive edifices, machinery and of course blueprints, there are also none to rival the Russian love for demolishing things.

The most spectacular feat of this kind was the blowing up of the monstrous cathedral which stood on an elevation just beyond the never-to-be-completed bridge. Efficiency was going to be the keynote of this job. They weren't going to use anything as old-fashioned and bourgeois as dynamite to blow up this cathedral. Not a bit of it! They had an ultra-modern sort of explosive which was the latest thing in its line, concocted by their own engineers especially for the occasion.

The impending event was enthusiastically ballyhooed in the Soviet papers as a super-spectacle, one which should be viewed by all patriotic Russians interested in seeing what advances their country had made in the science of blowing up cathedrals. In order that everyone might get in on the big show, the day set aside for the event was

Red Sunday. But, alas! The men in charge of the explosion hadn't reckoned with the pre-revolutionary custom of building the walls of important buildings almost as thick as they were high.

On the Great Day a vast crowd of excited, chattering Russians, herded behind taut police lines, stood pop-eyed with expectation in the square before the doomed cathedral. The hour struck. Solemnly, the engineer in charge touched off the mysterious explosive.

FLUP!

The ancient cathedral merely grunted and collapsed feebly within itself. No bricks flew through the air. No spires leaped into the heavens. Even the noise was a disappointment. And the blown-up cathedral, "demolished," was nearly as large and imposing a structure as it had been before the explosion!

There seems to be very little coöperation between the demolition trust and the trust which is sworn to beautify Moscow by painting the outsides of buildings. Time and again I have noticed that the painters have no more torn down their scaffolding and stood off to admire their handiwork than along comes the wrecking crew, puts up more scaffolding and tears the entire building down.

Much of this sort of thing is the result of bureaucracy which, in Russia, is a fearful and wonderful thing. Russian government is a veritable maze of schemes, counter-schemes, plans and plans within plans, each individual one with a private bevy of fanatical advocates, all at one time working in different and often conflicting directions. And the whole works tied up in as interminable a mass of Red tape as you ever saw.

This system of Red tape alone affords limitless pleas-

ure to countless numbers of major and minor Soviet officials. But it is often extremely exasperating to the foreigner who has no time to play around with it.

There was the case of Jack Calder, the Canadian construction engineer who had made such a record in building the Leningrad automobile plant. I saw him off on the train, bound for Central Asia on a journey which would take six days by rail and six more by horseback. He was to remain there two years.

Two months later he was suddenly called back to Moscow for a conference which lasted a week. Ready again to return to his job he found himself unable, through some involved matter of bureaucracy, to obtain the necessary food to sustain him on his long and arduous journey.

His tickets were all bought. He refused to move and it was ten days before the Red tape was finally cut and he got under way to take up the work which was to cost a stupendous sum.

Toward the latter part of my second visit to Soviet Russia I met a consulting engineer who was charged with rationalizing apartment house construction throughout the entire USSR. A few nights before I left Moscow he told me, with a fanatical gleam in his eye, that he had submitted a plan which would save the Soviet Government 8,000,000 roubles during the coming year. He was deeply hurt when I suggested that he must have advised them to stop building.

I then countered with a plan which I had, to do away with traffic congestion and inefficiency in the countless offices and factories and trusts in Moscow. It is so very simple that it has never occurred to the professional planners.

In brief, the plan was for every person engaged in any capacity in planning to remain in his or her room, play the radio, drink tea, or just sit and look out the window.

This would give the people who are actually working a year or two to catch up with the plans that have already been undertaken.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

### *ARREST BY THE GPU AND THE BATTLE OF THE NEGATIVES*

I TURNED over all the Donetz Basin negatives to *Soyuzphoto* who promised them back as soon as prints had been made for the Coal Trust and Amtorg. They had decided to break that promise even before they made it, but I didn't know that at the time. Comrade Rohr on behalf of *Soyuzphoto* made a desperate effort to confiscate that 1,000 roubles as a settlement of the only 1,000 roubles I had received since joining up three months earlier. But the Foreign Office beat him to it.

But the great family worry, now that we'd begun to see the futility of our ever successfully "building Socialism," was how I could recover my negatives from *Soyuzphoto* and get them out of the country.

One day Spencer Williams dropped in and tactfully suggested that if I would just sign a statement that I had seen no forced labor in the Donetz Basin, he was sure Andreychen would be able to straighten out a lot of my difficulties. It seemed that Spencer and Herzog had already signed the affidavit and didn't consider it any stretching of the conscience. However, I learned privately that these affidavits were to be sent to our own American

The Anthropological Museum of Moscow University boasts the largest and most varied collection of human skulls in the world. Here we find workers cataloguing a few soldiers of another war.



# АГИ ПЯТИЛЕТКИ



ЛИК СМОТРИТ ЗЫМ БАРБОСМ,  
И СМОТТ БУТРИСТЫМ НОСМ,  
КОУА С ГОРМ ПЛЕТ ЗАБОМ,  
ОГОПЕЛЫМ ВУСТ ВОМ.

ЛИКНИ ПРОДАЮЩИЙ КУРНАЛИСТ,  
ОСТРИТ ИЛЬЮМ КАЛТАЛИСТ,  
ИНЫШЕВНИКЕ ВО-ВСЮ ПИРЕС,  
ВОМКА БЕЛАЯ МАТЕРИТСЯ,—



ВСА, НЕ ЛОСАМЕННЫЕ В КЛЕТКУ,  
ВСА, КТО СТОИТ ЗА СТАРКУ,  
ЗАО ПРОЧИНАЮТ ПОТЯВЕТКУ  
И ОБЪЯВЛЯЮТ ЕЯ ВОЙКУ,

ГРОЗИТ ЕЯ СРЬДОМ, ПОНИМАЯ,  
ЧТО В НЕЯ — ПОГИБАТЬ ИХ ПРИМАЯ

ДЕНЬКИ ВЕДНЫ



## РАЗОБЛАЧАЙТЕ СЕКТАНТСКИЕ ШТУКИ

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Enemies of the Five Year Plan, reading left to right: top row—Bureaucrat Moujik, Foreign Journalist, Capitalist; bottom row—Drunkard, Priest, Menshevik, Military Engineer. While the new Russian machinery forges ahead under the slogan “Destroy Sectarian Chicanery.” . . .

•

Foreign Department in anticipation of a Congressional investigation which had been urged by the Pennsylvania coal companies who unsocially resented the dumping of Soviet anthracite. I refused to sign the affidavit and my difficulties continued.

And then came what, for a couple of days, the resident correspondents as well as the embassies considered the biggest story since the Revolution, the covering of which landed me in jail.

For five years the rouble had been steadily inflating until it had reached thirty and forty to the dollar instead of two, the official rate. The correspondents and the embassies were permitted to buy foods, wines and the necessities, comforts, even luxuries of life at a store maintained for their exclusive benefit. There was also *Torgsin* the greatest system of chain stores in the world and unique in their slogan which, though not emblazoned on their stationery, read: We take any money except roubles.

*Torgsin* was organized particularly for natives who had illegally hoarded foreign money, gold or silver, who could, when their empty stomachs prompted them, buy excellent food and no questions asked. Many of them were shadowed and checked up on after making purchases, imprisoned and even executed for having had in their possession the money they had been invited to spend.

I need no interpreter to read the short, courteous but very positive letter *Torgsin* one day addressed to me. It announced the fact that two days from the date indicated, *Torgsin* would place at my service its facilities on a *valuta* basis.

Within an hour a riot call had been sent out and the correspondent colony was gathered at Chamberlin's while

pecially delegated members were rushed to embassies. Foreign Moscow went into a nose dive with correspondents rushing to file cables they thought would startle the world.

While I think of it this story, "the greatest since the Revolution," was cut and played down in the outside press of the world. It was a jolt to the press on this outpost of civilization to learn how little the great publics of our bourgeois lands were shocked and hurt by the fact that they could no longer eat for something like nothing a week.

The embassies sent coded messages protesting to their respective governments who, like the city editors of the correspondents, also became barely excited. Ambassadors called in person at the office of Foreign Commissar Litvinov, who couldn't get out of town in time to avoid their protests.

But the next day was to go down in history. For one day we, the privileged class, could buy our food at the old rouble prices. I was at the food store when the doors opened. Every other correspondent, his wife, servants, chauffeur, friends and relations had thought of the same thing and every automobile connected with every embassy was lined up on Petrovka Boulevard as far as the eye could see. The Germans got ahead of the rest by engaging a truck to carry away food supplies. A bargain sale at Macy's was never like this and the American cash register began a staccato tune which rattled like a machine gun until six o'clock that night, when there was hardly a crumb of bread or a unit of caviar left in the then naked and vibrating shelves.

But in the meantime I had gone to jail. Why? Well, I

had set up my camera and recorded one shot of the scene for posterity. And as I moved in on the sidewalk I was pounced on by a member of the *militzi*.

"Pack up and come with me in the auto," he said.

I pretended not to understand, I showed him all the credentials I could dig out of my pocket. To no avail. Finally I accepted his invitation and got into his Ford with its uniformed police driver and its blue star on the windshield, and off we went. We drove almost as fast as we used to when I was covering crime in Chicago and riding with the vice squad.

We halted at a police station; I was ordered by the lieutenant to remain in the custody of the armed chauffeur while he went inside. It was fifteen minutes before the lieutenant returned and I overheard him say to the chauffeur the three letters which have struck terror into the hearts of millions of Russians ever since this secret police organization so successfully operated the *Ochrona* of the Czar.

The lieutenant grudgingly informed me that my crime was political rather than civil. This was disturbing. I hastily recalled that Commissar of Foreign Affairs Litvinov had, when finding himself in a similar situation in France, with the added impetus of a murder rap, talked the French into refusing the Czarist Government's request for extradition on the grounds that robbing and killing a Czarist bank messenger had been merely a "political crime." But the last thing I wanted to do was to resist extradition from Russia, no matter where to.

We drove up that alley I had so often peeped into as I crossed Lubyanka Square. The uniformed GPU men who were on duty night and day had always glared at me

as I turned my eyes toward the forbidden and forbidding sanctum of political police. But on this occasion we motored past them without nodding and drew up in front of a sinister-looking doorway, my telltale camera swung over my shoulder, "the weapon" with which I had been caught red-handed and for the fourth time bucking the System.

There were no bars on the outside windows of the building, which faced the street and Lubyanka Square, these being occupied by the clerical force. The cellars go down a considerable distance and this is where prisoners are kept. Of course, the headquarters building is merely used for those who have just been arrested and trials are scarcely cluttered up with Red tape. You either get sentenced to prison, sent to Siberia or executed and there is not a great deal of suspense.

The building into which I was taken is the old building of the GPU and at this time was having the customary two extra stories imposed. The new building, just across the street, is a modern, brownstone building of fourteen stories containing a theater and an enormous food, clothing and department store, accessible only to members of the GPU and their families.

The receiving officer snapped me out of my unpleasant reverie with a crisp greeting:

"*Szdrasdesze, tovarisch!*" he said, fixing his eyes upon my probably pale face. "Good day to you, Comrade."

"*Kakoye familyar?*" he inquired, poising a pencil over a well-filled ledger. "What is your family name?"

"Comrade Abbe," I replied, dragging out probably for the thousandth time since I arrived in the Soviet Union all the official documents which bore the telltale mark

of a photographer stamped officially and countersigned by heaven knows how many bureaucrats or police officers.

The GPU officer who received me was a man of about thirty, clean-shaven with a well-shaped head, piercing eyes, but with the suggestion of humor. His attitude as well as the attitude of the higher officers who finally put me through the verbal third degree could easily have been mistaken for a joke had I not known the Russian idea of a joke, i.e., Siberia, execution or a beating up!

The time of the interview was approximately 11 A.M.

The receiving officer dismissed the police lieutenant, pressed a button and two more GPU men seemed to pop up from nowhere. We saluted each other.

With one leading and the other following, we started off on a voyage through winding corridors and short flights of steps which for sheer mystery and atmosphere of foreboding topped anything I had ever seen. At every turning there was the inevitable guard with fixed bayonet: not for two seconds on the whole long journey was I out of sight of a sentry.

Once we crossed a courtyard which was almost deserted save for a guard in each corner. There was an indescribable air of horror about the place, which suggested that a scaffold might fit nicely into the center. GPU executions take place in the cellar and the padded walls prevent rifle-shots from being heard even on the floor above. Perhaps in those cellars, behind the barred windows I saw only too plainly, down below the stone flagging of the courtyard, was the place where the GPU had stood a room so full of prisoners that no one could possibly lean over or sit down—where they stayed hour after hour until the guard would, maybe after half a day or a

day, open the door a crack and call for volunteers to confess they had gold, silver or *valuta* hoarded. Maybe I was looking at the very cellar where a man I had known during my two visits to Russia had, with his own automatic, shot down forty defenseless prisoners for the sheer sadistic joy of killing.

Now we were out of this courtyard so ominous in its suggestion of the Russian trait of freedom with human life. Up another flight of steps we went. The last corridor we traversed was like that on an ocean liner, its cabin doors lining either side. Through occasionally open and half-open doors I caught glimpses of civilian passengers who suggested the shipboard scene in that play which dealt with a trip to the other world, *Outward Bound*.

Into one of these cabins my escorts marched me. Inside were four or five GPU men smoking and conversing as they used to in Chicago Police Headquarters when I was on the safe side of the law. They were a friendly lot. One of them spoke German. I was beginning to like them when my guards returned and we started off all over again.

This time we got into a corridor where there was much activity. We halted before a door marked COMMANDANT and I began to feel more important and more uneasy at the same time. The uneasiness got the upper hand when my guards motioned me to a stool outside the door and disappeared before I had a chance to suggest that if the Commandant were busy I could come back another time.

I lit a cigarette and started nodding to the passers-by. Some of them seemed surprised. But all acknowledged my salutations. I missed the short-skirted secretaries



whose presence had always helped to while away the hours of waiting in less military places.

During the quarter-hour I waited I probably dictated to myself five thousand words of all the first-hand cruelties I had learned of in Russia. Finally the officer who had conducted me to my observation stool returned, accompanied by another. This man wore two diamonds on his tunic collar so I knew that he was a major general. The Comrade General asked me if I spoke French, then in that polite language invited me to accompany him, together with the officer who had brought me in.

The door to one of the cabins was opened for me and we went into a little room about six feet by twelve, with a window. Two officers rose, one had four diamonds on his collar. This was going to be good. Four diamonds—the Commander of an Army! I began to wonder if these people had confused me with a White Russian spy.

The Commanding General asked me in Russian what language I preferred to speak. I chose my native tongue, interspersed with French, German and what little I knew of Russian. The fourth member of the inquisitorial board wore only two squares on his tunic collar which made him a first lieutenant. I took him to be the General's secretary: he was the only one who spoke English. The General spoke German so we carried on our conversation in four languages.

The Lieutenant asked me how long I had been in Russia. I lit a cigarette proffered me by the General and replied:

“Seven months.”

“What gazette do you represent?” asked the General.

"I did represent the *New York Times*," I explained, "but four months ago I went to work for *Soyuzphoto*."

The major general spoke up.

"The *New York Times* is a capitalistic paper, is it not?"

"Yes," I admitted, "I suppose it would be considered that; but that would hardly make me a Capitalist. In my country a man is a Capitalist only when he has some capital; and I have no money except what I've borrowed from my colleagues of the correspondent corps here."

"You have taken many photographs since you have been in Russia?"

"Yes, five or six hundred, beginning with Comrade Stalin in the Kremlin."

At this the four of them looked at me as if maybe I was more dangerous than I appeared.

"When did you photograph Comrade Stalin?" I was asked skeptically.

"On April thirteenth."

"How did you arrange this matter?"

"Through the Foreign Office. Comrade Neumann conducted me to Comrade Stalin's office."

[They exchanged looks amongst their group and one of them excused himself and left the room.]

"Have you been arrested before in USSR?"

"Oh yes, many times," I said. "Once when I was here in 1927 and this is the third time during this visit."

"Why were you arrested before?" the secretary continued.

"Well, on one occasion, you see, I was taking photographs of a railroad station, not knowing it was forbidden. I was arrested probably through mistake."

"Where was that?"

I described the station which was a junction point in the Donetz Basin but I couldn't remember the name:

"I suggest, however, that you refer to Comrade Lifschitz of *Amtorg*, who got me out of arrest that time and can give you any data you want."

"You do not seem to be annoyed by being arrested?"

Only once, I told them, and I recounted the incident of my arrest on the Moscow street car for breaking a pane of glass. I told this story without a suggestion of a smile on my face and with as much vehemence as I could muster, even standing up and thumping slightly on the table to emphasize points. At the end of the dissertation on Moscow police methods and my resultant injured feelings, I pulled out the receipt for my eight roubles fine and showed it to the GPU officials.

Instead of being impressed with the injustice done me, they threw back their heads and laughed uproariously. This was disconcerting but relieved the tension. It occurred to me that if they thought my experience funny I could tell them others. I did.

In snatches of four languages I outlined to them the story of my past seven months in Russia. For once in my life I was inspired. Evidently these men had been afforded no opportunity to observe the funny side of Bolshevik endeavor. They were starving for comedy.

I told them the story of my first arrest by the GPU in the winter of 1927 at the time of my first visit to Soviet Russia. I told them funny stories of how I tried to take pictures for *Soyuzphoto* without films; how I was living without any money; how I had practically created an impasse between the Foreign Office and the *Soyuzphoto* as

to how I should be treated and whether I should ever be paid. I was inspired by the idea of all the publicity I was going to get abroad for being the first correspondent actually to be arrested and incarcerated by the GPU in their headquarters in Moscow. I was inspired by the fact that I had discovered that regardless of their reputation for cruelty and barbarism, high officials of the GPU look like human beings when you see them face to face. I was inspired to talk rapidly, perhaps too rapidly, for the reason that lying on the table between us was my hand camera, containing exposed films which I had just sworn I had never exposed. I don't know what prompted me to lie to them, as it would have been such a simple matter for them to have developed them and proved me a liar and it is still on my conscience that they were so nice as to take my word for it, and it was the only untruthful remark I made to them.

I wound up my plea for more laughs and fewer groans with what I regarded as the funniest thing I had experienced there—that after having been received into the highest Bolshevick society, I should end up under arrest in the GPU. They admitted that this was slightly funny but not side-splitting and, after they had heard all the evidence, my trial came to an end in this way:

The Comrade officer who spoke English leaned forward and, in a groping manner, said:

"We will let you go this time. But if you take any more forbidden photos, we will put you in—in—" he could not remember the word in English, so I supplied it:

"Jail."

"Yes, jail," he repeated after me, and the inquisition was over. As I picked up my camera and put on my over-

coat the Comrade Commandant leaned forward over his desk and, in a tone just reeking with suggestion, said:

"You do not expect to remain in Russia very long, do you, Comrade Abbe?"

I could whistle, sing or play on the strings of a guitar the tune which is played on the Kremlin clock tower every quarter of an hour, culminating each hour in the most elaborate musical program. I could in a way imitate the playing of the *Internationale* which takes place at 3 A.M. every day on the chimes of one of the Kremlin churches which used to be rung to the national anthem of old Russia. Red Square is in every detail engraved on my mind because it was across the Red Square that I used to go to battle with *Soyuzphoto*; it was on Red Square I used to stand and think up what I was going to say when I went in to try to get back my negatives.

I had about made up my mind and was on the point of bearding Rohr in his den when I met him coming down Nikolskaya and asked him what about my negatives. He lit a cigarette and started groping around in the archives of the falsehood department of his mind for a new excuse. It seemed that he had only just instructed Miss Markovitch, his secretary, to get the Abbe negatives together and assemble them so he and I could look them over together.

"Let's go back and do it now," I said.

"That's impossible," he replied, "I have a very important appointment," looking at his watch which couldn't have been running as it was two hours late.

I knew right well he was off for the Metropole Hotel

for his coffee. Time and again I'd sat in his office while one of his numerous secretaries had kept answering the phone and saying, "Tovarisch Rohr is in conference. . . . Is out on an important matter. . . . Is supervising the taking of photos. . . . Is in some factory or other." And then I'd go around to the Metropole and there he'd be sitting over his coffee and reading the free papers from Germany. Just as they do in Vienna where for generations his ancestors had been reading free papers in cafés.

I backed him into the doorway of a church and got violent, insisting that he return to his office and give me those negatives. Finally, in desperation, he said:

"You go back and tell Miss Markovitch to be sorting them out, and wait for me; I'll be right back and go over them with you."

Poor little Miss Markovitch, I hope she didn't go to Siberia for the trick I played on her.

As soon as Rohr left me I raced along the street and up the *Soyuzphoto* stairs two at a time. Bursting unceremoniously into his office, I told the secretary that I had just met Comrade Rohr in the street and he'd said she must turn over the negatives to me at once. She demurred but I said it was very urgent.

She started getting them out of a drawer while I shifted from one foot to another wondering if Rohr smelled a rat and would come rushing in. It took her only five minutes. They had obviously been assembled for weeks but when it came to actually giving them to me she was for asking the permission of the Director of *Soyuzphoto*.

I said:

"There's no time for that!"

"Why all the hurry?"

"There is no time to explain," I said.

So she handed me the whole load which, five or six hundred of them, made a small packet. I gave her a receipt for them and moved!

Like the frog which jumps up three feet and falls back two, I was still some distance from where I wanted to be. Having the negatives in my possession yet not knowing how I'd get them through the GPU lines out of the country was scarcely comforting.

Then came pressure from the Foreign Office but I think the Foreign Office was secretly enjoying my turning of the tables on *Soyuzphoto*. *Amtorg* too, in the person of Andreychen, began pushing me for a signed affidavit about forced labor in the Donetz Basin.

Now came the question of buying my tickets out of Russia; an easy question! Exactly this: roubles or dollars. *Amtorg* alone could help me.

The *Amtorg* offices in Moscow are if anything more hectic than those in New York. All the engineers going out of Russia get into the *Amtorg* offices and sit around in the outer office, swapping tales of life in Russia with the incoming engineers who give news from home. When I went there I found the inevitable young radical-minded school-teacher girl from the Middle West still flushed with excitement. More interesting was Hamilton, the architect, one of the prize winners in the Soviet Palace competition. New York *Amtorg* for some reason handed him his fare and shipped him off to Moscow at a moment's notice; Moscow *Amtorg* could not discover who had sent for him; so he was in a bit of a stew. More interesting still was Andreychen's expression—he was a

Trotsky supporter—when I presented him with a picture of Stalin.

*Soyuzphoto* informed me in no uncertain terms that they would not recommend GPU sealing my negatives with the official seal. But by that time I was willing to accept a half loaf instead of no bread at all. George called in Jerry Lifschitz and asked him to draw up the affidavit; luckily I retained sufficient sense to take it home. Had I signed it, I would have been so unalterably committed to recommending Bolshevism that I would not now be writing this book.

Finally, with the help of a legal adviser at a friendly embassy, I wrote a statement which can be construed according to one's viewpoint. Two years later I learned it was construed in one way or another, I don't know which, by our State Department in Washington. Jerry and I went on in an *Amtorg* car to a notary public and made this document a matter of official record—and that was that.

With a letter in my pocket from *Amtorg*, authorizing the railroad tickets and roubles, I went on my way.

Three problems remained: to pay my bills, to get rid of objects (worthless) acquired in Russia, to smuggle my negatives over the border. We packed with elaborate craft, putting my photographs in a package very close to the Stalin autographed photo.



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## CHAPTER XIX

### GOING OUT

TWO A.M. The faithful little upturned German electric iron was boiling more and more water for more and more tea. We bent over the massive Czarist desk speculating on the possibility of getting out with my eight months' worth of negatives. The children fast asleep sprawled over three beds side by side like canal boats lashed together. Between yawns we looked out of the big window at the Kremlin where that orderly-minded Joseph Stalin was sleeping as peacefully as the children behind us.

What a country! What a mad people! I thought if the Bon Dieu would just let me get out of this mad country with these negatives I'd promise Him on my word of honor that I'd never do it again.

At five o'clock in the afternoon, *Amtorg* informed me that my package bore the seal of the GPU. Now we had to get to work in earnest, for either they had eliminated the greater part of my negatives or, seeing Stalin on top, they had decided to let things go. In either case, my next move was to leave Russia before *Soyuzphoto* got wind of it all.

Had it been possible, we would have taken the 11:30 train that night: but life was not so simple in Soviet Russia. You must have a visa to get out of the country as well as to get in.

The visa office in Moscow presents a picture almost as pathetic as a village of starving peasants. If ever despair, hope, prayer, suspense and fear were written on the thin faces of human beings, it was in that wooden building.

No Soviet citizen may leave Russia merely for a change of atmosphere, rest or recreation. It must be on government business; and only employees who have passed some acid test get out. Even then, often a man is selected for Paris or New York and is gradually converted to the enemy.

There were several offices fronting what had once been an enormous second-story hallway. Into the first office went those who were to have their first examination.

The door opened, a clerk called "*Tovarisch* So-and-so," and *Tovarisch* What's-his-name rose to his feet, walked with trepidation, disappeared within. The door closed. The eyes of those waiting were glued to the door. We had all seen the man who made these decisions. He wore a snappy uniform of the GPU, was well set up, lighted one cigarette from the end of another and as he occasionally walked through our hallway, looked us over with a sadistic expression as much as to say:

"I hold you in my power. Your life and possible happiness are matters over which I have absolute control."

The only comforting thought to me was that my chances for getting out of the country were better than his. It would be impossible for him to look daily into the faces

of people who pleaded for permission to leave the country without himself beginning to think that there must be some lure to the civilizations beyond his frontier. It was also an entertaining thought that Stalin himself was trapped with his 160,000,000 dependents; he would have the power to leave but he might find it difficult to get from one of the foreign embassies any visa to enter somebody else's country.

My turn finally came. Across the desk sat the official whom I regarded with greater awe than I had regarded even Joseph Stalin. I put upon his desk the three passports of the Abbe family. All of them seemed satisfactory save mine.

"You must come back tomorrow," he said.

I experienced a sinking feeling.

"Why should there be any doubt about my visa?"

"I didn't say there was any doubt about your visa," he replied.

"Then why have you immediately visaed the passports of my family and hesitated about mine?"

He pushed a button on his desk and announced to the attendant that he would see the next client.

Turning (I must admit, politely) to me, he said:

"If I stopped to explain to each and every one who comes in here why he cannot be granted a visa immediately you would have to wait five years for yours."

All that afternoon I worked to get the railroad tickets, also promised for the next day; then we held a sale of clothes for Bolsheviki, who make a practice of stripping a departing visitor to the bone for wearing apparel, household utensils, tooth brushes, safety razors, etc.

The middleman in this illegal trade was a young, beautiful Russian girl. She was a perfect example of what the Horse Trust was and probably is still aiming for: a thoroughbred strain.

We traded her three pairs of Mamma's silk stockings for her family samovar; about 1,200 roubles was realized for bits of clothing we would have given to a rummage sale in America; twelve hundred roubles was almost half of my hotel bill. A second-hand lipstick of Mamma's which could be bought for one mark in Germany brought 28 roubles—official rate \$14, bootleg \$1. One customer tried to persuade Mamma to sell her one remaining pair of shoes and walk out barefooted. Then she took a fancy to Mamma's sweater which was all Mamma had left to cover her. She compromised by buying the collar off this sweater which Mamma obligingly cut off for her.

In the end, nevertheless, with our figurative cash register ringing nearly day and night, we were still a thousand roubles short of paying our hotel bill when the time came to leave. In desperation I phoned every correspondent in Moscow requesting that he come or send as soon as possible whatever money he could spare toward a pool which would be known as the "Godspeed the Abbe Fund."

One after the other the men whose names are bywords in the press of England, France, Germany and America came pouring into our room with contributions which they flopped into the waiting hat on the floor.

In the late forenoon, I walked into the Foreign Office and picked up my visaed passport like that!

I made a hurried trip in the afternoon to the Foreign

Office to bid them all good-bye. Dear old Padolski took me into his private office for the last time and said:

"Well, Abbe, I doubt if ever we had a journalist who caused us so much concern as you, but actually I'm sorry to see you go!"

I was so touched that I said, perhaps a little weakly:

"Well, maybe we can fix things up so I won't have to go."

This almost brought Padolski to his feet:

"Oh, I didn't mean it that way," he said. Then:

"As a matter of fact, I may possibly come down to the station to see you off tonight."

At the train a letter of apology was handed me from Padolski saying that while his impulse had been good, he was afraid to establish a precedent.

The hotel management couldn't believe it when we paid the bill. They couldn't believe we had gone and are probably still looking for the keys to the doors, closets and drawers that Richard ecstatically packed in his pocket.

At 10.30 P.M. the automobiles of the journalists arrived: French, British and American predominated, but there was scarcely a nationality that was not represented. We packed into the automobiles, my family divided up amongst more than a dozen cars, one here and one there and off we went with as much pomp as the funeral of Madame Stalin.

Of a sudden I felt like weeping at leaving my colleagues who had stood by us so nobly all these months.

Dear old Jerry Lifschitz, my comrade of Donetz Basin, the man who had put bedbugs in American hotel beds on behalf of the IWW, looked as if he were going to make a speech. My emotions rather got the better of me, and turning to Gene Lyons, I said:

"Hard-boiled press photographer that I am, hard-boiled reporter that you are, I nevertheless think this is the most touching tribute to my family which has ever taken place!"

"What tribute?" inquired Gene.

"Why, coming down to see us off like this."

Then Gene looked me straight in the eye.

"I thought you understood," he explained, "this is merely the last meeting of your creditors!"

One more hazard for the negatives. The frontier. Next afternoon at the customs office in Negorelye, we piled our luggage on the visa counter. I opened my bag. As the official slit the package of negatives it sounded like the slitting of the skin which covers my backbone. As I unfolded the paper which had enveloped food from our store, the first object to meet the eye of the official was the autographed picture of Joseph Stalin, Ruler of All the Russias.

The interest of the Inspector was immediate and significant.

"*Stotokoye?* What is that?" he asked.

"That is a photograph which I took of Stalin. He autographed it for me."

The Inspector immediately sent for the Chief Inspector and in three minutes the entire uniformed guard was gathered about our group. Reaching in my pocket, I produced a dozen or more postcard prints of the same photo-

graph which I distributed to these Comrades. The effect was instantaneous.

Then there are the photographs I did not take:

A herd of Ukrainian peasants being driven to the GPU stockyards: a winding dusty road leads to a local jail from which these resigned-looking bearded men who wouldn't "build Socialism" are to be shipped off on the train, too far away from their native section ever to attempt to return. Brawny and capable, they will "build Socialism" within close range of the GPU. The fixed bayonets of the herdsmen are liable to be used before even the local jail is reached, because the Russian peasant often prefers death to changing his mind.

Jerry Lifschitz, sitting beside me in the car, looked embarrassed as I exposed this typical picture of Russia on my brain.

The struggling and screaming woman being lifted into the truck on Petrovska Boulevard in Moscow, wailing that she was innocent. The group watching from the curb did not crowd in as close as they do on a civil police arrest. This was the GPU.

Landscape near Cliasma.

The white birch and pine tree forest in the distance . . . the sun-splashed figure silhouetted against the summer clouds: not a marble statue but the firm pink flesh-and-blood body of the sixteen-year-old daughter of a

Soviet official. The more matronly nude figure at her side is that of Ivy Low, of the *Moscow Daily News* (in private life Madame the Wife of the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Maxim Litvinov).

The main street of this little Ukrainian village, some eight miles from the gorgeous Dnieperstroy Dam. A crumpled figure lying on the curb resting—in eternity. He was just too hungry.

From left to right: Comrade the Manager of the Select Hotel, where I lived in 1927-28; Comrade the Hotel Clerk of the same hotel, whose beautiful French stamped him as a member of the Old Régime; Countess So-and-so, who had been my interpreter and secretary; Comrade my photographic assistant of 1927-28; Comrade Blank, an official of VOKS (The Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries); Comrade Leon Trotzky. These ghostly figures actually never posed for a group photograph. But they are grouped indelibly in my memory as friends and acquaintances, who had been "liquidated" before my return in 1932.

This shot is directly on top of the Dnieperstroy Dam. The long-coated individual with the revolver in his hand is a GPU man. The protesting workman at whom the revolver is pointed, I learned a little later, had been suspected of sabotage. Hastily drawing my camera from its holster, I was almost ready to shoot what looked like an



impromptu execution—when my guide grasped my camera wrist with a grip of steel.

An aerial view of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, showing a nation of well-built homes, humming and efficient factories, and 160,000,000 people whose faces are beaming at the overwhelming success of “building Socialism” under the “Dictatorship of the Proletariat.”









